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The project team included:
Mary Vogel, Co-Director
Roger Martin, Senior Research Fellow, Professor Emeritus
James Pettinari, Senior Research Fellow
Laura Detzler, Research Fellow
Egle Vanagaite, Research Fellow
Cindy Zerger, Research Fellow
Carlos Fernandez, Research Fellow
Cynthia Lapp, Research Fellow

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For alternative formats, direct requests to:
Center for Changing Landscapes
151 Rapson Hall
89 Church Street
Minneapolis, MN  55455
612.624.7557

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Gail Miller, Renville County Recorder, Renville County Park and Trail Committee
Gene Johnson, Planning Commission, Renville County Park and Trail Committee
Jon Wogen, Park Commission, Renville County Park and Trail Committee
Kathy Munsch, Park Commission, Renville County Park and Trail Committee
Mark Erickson, Director, Renville County ECD, Renville County Park and Trail Committee
Michelle Breidenbach, Renville County Public Health, Renville County Park and Trail Committee
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ANALYSIS

TOPOGRAPHY & WIND

Most of Renville County is flat and rolling terrain with ravines cut by creeks that flow south to the Minnesota River. The Glacial River Warren Valley and the Minnesota River form the County’s southern boundary.

The prevailing southwestern and northwestern winds that sweep across the prairie provide potential challenges to cyclists. The changes in topography, the wind, and the prairie suggest a trail strategy that:

- Locates the trail in areas that are protected from the wind whenever possible and when not, incorporates wind buffering as part of the trail design.
- Most of the flat terrain is well suited for cycling. Reaching the Minnesota River with its drop in elevation could be challenging for some.

Prevailing Wind Pattern
ANALYSIS

WATERSHEDS & HYDROLOGY
Renville County has three sub watersheds: two flow south and are part of the larger Minnesota River watershed; the third flows north to Crow River. The Crow River Watershed contains remnant prairie pothole lakes; almost all the lakes previously in the Minnesota River sub watersheds no longer exist because they have been drained by vast drainage networks.

The County’s drainage system is a distinctive and important feature of its landscape. The extensive tiling of individual fields and the network of drainage ditches have transformed the landscape. Drainage ditches, some of which are twenty-five feet deep, carry vast quantities of water from former wetlands and lakes drying the land to create very fertile farm fields.

Design Implications
- Creating special places where the trail intersects with the creeks as places to stop, rest, and enjoy the rivers.
- Celebrating the remaining lakes as features to be enjoyed and interpreted.
- Interpreting the engineering that created the rich farmland.

Major Watersheds
Hydrologic Alterations

Municipalities

Present Day Open Water

Pre-European Settlement Lakes

Present Day Drainage Ditches

Present Day Rivers & Streams

Pre-European Settlement Wet Prairie

WATERSHEDS & HYDROLOGY
HISTORIC MAP OF 1874

The historic Renville County map depicts the early settlements that were clustered along the river and creeks and between the lakes in the northeastern part of the County. The original settlements were not railroad communities like many other counties in South Central and Southwestern Minnesota. The areas of wetlands were not settled at first.

The map also shows that from the very beginning this flat prairie land had a very regular land division system. It was easily subdivided into sections and 6 by 6-mile townships. Only the townships that border the Minnesota River depart from this pattern. This regular pattern of lines still exists today; many county and township roads were built on these original lines, and farmsteads are still bounded by them.

Design Implications

- Although much of the emphasis in historic preservation/interpretation centers on built structures, the trail can also provide an opportunity to interpret historic landscapes by:
  - Referencing initial settlement patterns, and
  - Recalling sites of former lakes and wetlands.
HISTORIC RAILROAD/COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

All of Renville County’s current communities were founded as railroad towns. Many of its early communities atrophied and disappeared as new and many original settlers moved to be close to the railroad. The county seat was moved from Beaver Falls to Olivia.

Unlike some of its neighboring counties, Renville does not have any abandoned rail lines that connect current and former communities. The County has two east/west rail lines. The larger and more important one carries about three trains per day, is owned by the Twin Cities & Western Railroad, and goes through the string of communities that are the larger cities in the County: Sacred Heart, Renville, Danube, Olivia, Bird Island, Hector, and Buffalo Lake. The southern rail line carries about one train a day, is owned by the Minnesota Plains Line, and goes through Morton, Franklin, and Fairfax.

Design Implications

- The seven-mile interval between communities provides the potential for trails connections between communities that are scaled to short distance cyclists.
- There is a potential for community trailheads that provide amenities.
Municipalities

Sacred Heart

Abandoned Rail Lines

Existing Rail Lines

Federal Highway

State Highway

HISTORIC RAILROAD/COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT PATTERNS
ROADS & TRAFFIC COUNTS

Federal, state, county, and township roads in Renville County form a grid that follows the County’s section lines. Traffic is concentrated on two east–west roads and two north-south roads. Highway 212 connects Sacred Heart, Renville, Danube, Olivia, Bird Island, Hector, and Buffalo Lake. Highway 19 connects Morton, Franklin, and Fairfax. Highway 71 connects Olivia, Morton, and the Minnesota River. Highway 4 connects Hector, Fairfax, and the Minnesota River. These important connecting roads are very busy with car and truck traffic. The County also has an extensive system of less busy paved roads and gravel roads that run parallel to the busy roads.

Design Implications

- Some of the roads in Renville County are very busy with car and truck traffic. High traffic counts make highways poor candidates for siting trails along them since high numbers of cars and trucks make cycling unpleasant and more dangerous.

- The less busy roads make good candidates for siting off-road trails along them.

- Long stretches of gravel roads are not good candidates because of the dust generated on them by trucks and cars. However, trails work on infrequently traveled gravel roads for short distances.

Traffic Counts
ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAYS (ROW)
The width of road right-of-ways often determine the feasibility or unsuitability of off-road trail alignments. The County has many narrow ROW roads; many of which are gravel.

Design Implications
- The combination of a narrow ROW and a gravel surface restricts the use of the 33 to 35 foot ROW roads.
- 40 to 60 foot ROW widths could provide space for a trail within the ROW but separated from the drive lanes if a deep ditch or ditched stream does not pose a restriction.

Right-of-Way Widths
ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAYS

Trails can be sited parallel to busy roads if the ROW is wide enough to accommodate a safe distance from them. The FairRidge State Trail is an example of a trail that runs parallel to a busy road.

Design Implications

- Relatively wide right-of-ways of State and US Highways provide opportunities for siting off-road trails throughout Renville County.
- Consideration must be taken to preserve the clear zones recommended for the recovery of vehicles that run off the road and for sight lines to see animals crossing the roadway.

Right-of-Way Widths

![Map showing right-of-way widths](image-url)
100’ ROW Adjacent to Railroad

100’ ROW

150’ ROW

200’ ROW
ANALYSIS

TRAILS, PARKS & WATER ACCESS

Renville County has one state park, Fort Ridgely State Park, and one existing state trail, FairRidge State Trail, and one planned state trail, the Minnesota River State Trail. Currently there are few existing local trails in Renville County. Most of the communities have wide, quiet city streets, but no city trails.

Renville has very good parks. It has a number of county parks along the Minnesota River that provide terrific opportunities for enjoyment of the River and its valley. The parks along the shore of the Minnesota River from west to east are: Skalbekken, Vicksburg, Anderson Lake, and Mack Lake. The County has other parks as well. Beaver Falls is very close to the river and Birch Coulee is on the upland. Lake Alice Park is a small park along the shores of Lake Allie, one of the prairie pothole lakes in the northeastern corner of the County.

Design Implications

- Because many Renville County communities have wide city streets with little traffic, city trails can be stripped on existing streets in many communities.

- In order to provide local access to the county trails, the city trails should be connected wherever possible to the county trail system with trailheads.

- The county trails system should connect to the FairRidge State Trail and the planned Minnesota River State Trail.

- Because they are very important destinations, the county trail system should provide connections to all of Renville County Parks and the State Park.

- Because the county parks provide good opportunities for access to the creeks and the Minnesota River, no additional access points are designed as part of this study.
LAND USE

In Renville County the land is characterized by:

- Very large agriculture fields of corn, sugar beets, and soybeans.
- A few remnant marshes that concentrate waterfowl and other birds exist in scattered areas;
- Wooded areas along perennial and intermittent streams, and
- Utility corridors sited along roads and in fields.

Design Implications

- Remnant areas of natural resource amenity such as ravines, open water, forests, and grasslands are assets to be accessed by the trail for rest, interpretation, and bird watching;
- Much of the countryside is farmland to be interpreted by the trail;
- The utility corridors in farm fields are not good candidates for siting a trail but those along roads are, and
- The openness of the land requires a wind buffering strategy.
ANALYSIS

OWNERSHIP
Because of the pervasiveness of rich farmland, there is very little public land in Renville County. Those that farm the land own most of the land. However, there are road and railway right-of-ways, CREP lands, and utility corridors.

Design Implications
- The lack of public land limits trail alignment opportunities; it requires that easements will be needed for the trail and/or many trail alignments will have to be sited along the right-of-ways of existing roads; and
- The protected landscapes that provide habitat for native species are potential assets to be enjoyed carefully by trail users; siting trails along these areas would add much to the trail experience.
ANALYSIS

AMENITIES
Renville County has a variety of amenities that include civic, commercial, and residential historic buildings; a beautiful river valley; creeks that flow into the Minnesota River, small communities, and large farm fields.

Design Implications
- The county trail system should access these amenities.
HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS

There are a number of historic sites and museums that tell the story of early settlement of Renville County. These include:

- Birch Coulee Township:
  - Birch Coulee Battle Site - 1862

- Fairfax:
  - Minneapolis and Saint Louis Depot - 1883

- Flora Township:
  - Schwandt State Monument
  - Vicksburg Cemetery

- Hector:
  - Hector Historical Society Museum

- Morton:
  - Lower Sioux Agency Historic Site
  - Renville County Historical Museum
  - Birch Coulee Battlefield Site
  - Birch Coulee School
  - Birch Coulee Monument
  - Loyal Indian Monument
  - Morton Pioneer Monuments Wayside Park
  - St. Cornelia's Church

- Olivia:
  - Heins Block - 1896
  - Renville County Courthouse and Jail - 1902

- Sacred Heart Township:
  - Joseph R. Brown House Ruins - 1861
  - Lars Rudi House - 1868
  - Sacred Heart Area Museum

- Wang Township:
  - Warren Heen Memorial Hicrest School

Design Implications

- Trails and trailheads should be sited to provide access to Renville County’s historic resources.
Municipalities
State & County Parks

TRAIL DESIGN

RENVILLE COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM
The Renville County System connects the County’s communities to all the county parks, the state park, and to each other with two long east-west routes and shorter north-south routes. The northern east-west route is a county route; the southern east-west route is the planned Minnesota River State Trail. The route from Hector to the Minnesota River joins the FairRidge State Trail at Fairfax. The System crosses the Minnesota River to connect to the trails in Redwood County.

The proposed trail system is a network of trails that:

- Connects the major population centers with the County’s major natural amenities,
- Connects to existing and future city trails,
- Provides many opportunities to interpret the larger landscape,
- Requires little if any land acquisition because it is sited along the less traveled paved roads or off the road in the road right-of-way. In areas where this is not possible and the road is not busy, easements or land acquisition could be avoided by siting the trail on the shoulder,
- Avoids busy highways whenever possible,
- Has short segments on gravel roads to access amenities,
- Connects to the existing FairRidge Trail to provide access to Fort Ridgely State Park, and
- Can be implemented in increments over time.

Connecting Amenities
RENVILLE COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM

- Municipalities
- Federally Owned Land
- DNR Owned Land
- County Owned Land
- Private CRP Land
- Grassland/Shrubland
- Forested Land
- Birding Trail
- Commemorative March
- Scenic Byway
- Future State Trails
- Proposed County Trails Adjacent to Paved Roads
- Proposed County Trails Adjacent to Unpaved Roads
- Alternate Proposed County Trails Through Private Land

Future Minnesota River Trail

- Renville County Park
- Skalbekken County Park
- Beaver Falls County Park
- Birch Coulee County Park
- Anderson Lake County Park
- Mack Lake County Park
- Lake Allie County Park
- Fargo County Park
- Black Lake County Park
TRAILS IN ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAYS

A buffer of trees, shrubs, and/or prairie grasses that separates the trail and roadway is very desirable. Buffers would also offer protection from the strong winds and provide some relief from the blazing summer sun. Trees larger than small ornamental trees can not be located by power lines. For safety reasons there must be some separation between the edge of the drive lane and the beginning of the vegetative buffer to provide sightlines for animals crossing the road and provide a space for vehicles to run off-the-road.

Design

- Some of the 66 foot ROW roads are gravel. It is not desirable to site a trail along these relatively narrow gravel roads. Although there is typically room in the 18 to 21 foot shoulder for a trail, dust produced by vehicles on an unpaved road would make traveling along it unpleasant.

- Road widths 100 feet or wider provide ample room for trail plus a thin green corridor/buffer.

Right-of-Way Widths
TRAIL DESIGN

TRAILS IN ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAYS
The roads with a right-of-way width of 100 feet and greater are typically state and federal highways. These roads have higher daily average traffic counts. So although all roads ideally would have a clear zone of at least 17 feet, it is more important to follow the clear zone design rules when possible on these roads than on the narrower county and township roads. These rules include:

- A 1:4 or flatter inslope and 1:3 or flatter backslope;
- No vegetation taller than 12 inches within the clear zone; and
- The accommodation of two passes of the mower from the edge of the shoulder.

Source: Mn/DOT Road Design Manual, Section 4.

Design
- The 150 foot ROW section shows multiple vegetation options if the trail passes by above ground utilities.
- Clear zones and clear sight lines are provided where the trail crosses roads.
- An easement or an acquisition of former railroad right-of-way that is currently privately held could provide for multiple trail uses and dense vegetative buffers.

Right-of-Way Widths

[Map showing various right-of-way widths and trail types]
100’ ROW Adjacent to Railroad

100'-150' ROW

150’ ROW

200’ ROW

TRAILS IN ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAYS
FORT RIDGELY STATE PARK

Fort Ridgely State Park is located 6 miles south of Fairfax and can be reached either by the 7.3 FairRidge State Trail or State Highway 4. The Park has 8 miles of hiking and 12 miles of horse trails and other numerous recreational facilities including picnic facilities, a rentable picnic shelter, thirty-one drive-in and 3 walk-in campsites, a group camp, and a horse camp. Other amenities include a volleyball court, a softball field, a year-around handicapped accessible chalet with flush toilets, seasonal drinking water, showers, a gift shop, and golf course with rental equipment. The Nicollet County Historical Society staffs the Fort Ridgely Historic Site during the summer months.

The Park was the site of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in the late 1930s. C.C.C. workers assisted in the location and excavation of 8 fort buildings, the restoration of the 1853 commissary building, and built twenty-six new park buildings and structures of Morton rainbow granite.

Source: Minnesota DNR
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK

Skalbekken Park is Renville largest, most popular county park on the shores of the Minnesota River. It has both an upland wayside rest and extensive land along the river. Its park amenities include walking, biking, snowmobile, and horse trails, two canoe launch sites, camping that includes horse camping, an historic cabin, the ruin of an historic dugout house, a shelter that is open in winter, picnic tables, restrooms, a beautiful hardware forest, Limbo Creek, and views across the river valley. The proposed Minnesota State Trail will pass thorough the park to cross the river to Redwood County.

Planned capitol improvements include building a new unisex restrooms in the upper wayside rest area, creation of a new camping area at the river and Limbo Creek, demolishing the existing restroom near Limbo Creek and locating a new one it near the new campsites, separating walking trails from horse trails, widening bike and walking trails, and installing interpretive signs that identify geological features, plant and animal species and historic sites.

Source: Barry Huisman, Renville County Parks
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK

- Picnic Shelter
- Equestrian Camping
- Carry-In Access
- Parking
- Campsite Restrooms
- Information
- Historic Site
- Park Roads
- Park Entrance
- Campsite
- Picnic Shelter
- Restrooms
- Proposed Trailhead
- Future State Trail
- Park Trails
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK: MAIN ENTRANCE & EQUESTRIAN CAMPSITE

Design
The existing entrance area and the horse camp is redesigned. Its features include:

- A one-way road is extended through the woods,
- The new horse camp road provides separation from the day-use area providing both safety and privacy,
- Fifty-foot long pull-through campsites that accommodate large horse trailers are located on each side of the new one-way road,
- Large bounders and trees define the campsite areas,
- Timber horse stalls are located between every other campsite,
- Some campsites are located across from each other for pair or group camping,
- The manure site is moved to the end of the road for easy access for removal, and
- Additional future horse campsites can be added in an arc configuration across from the picnic shelter.
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK: HISTORIC CABIN

Design
The existing park road is relocated to create an inviting space by the historic log house. Its features include:

- A circular parking area bounded by boulders,
- A new hiking trail segment is located along parts of the old road,
- Benches are placed in a circular pattern for a group lecture space or a campfire, and
- Additional tables are placed on the slope below the benches.
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK: LIMBO CREEK CAMPSITES

Design
The tent areas in the park are expanded and improved. Their features include:

- Existing campsites are formalized and parking associated with them is expanded,
- A new group campsite on a mound south of the road overlooking the Minnesota River has a circle of tent sites and a group picnic area,
- A new restroom is located between the two tent camping areas,
- A new hiking trail is sited along the river,
- A separate horse trail is sited parallel to the park road, and
- The canoe access and access trail are improved.
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK: LIMBO CREEK CAMPSITES

- Tent Camping Sites
- Access Trail to Main Pedestrian Trail
- Main Park Road
- New Rest Facilities
- Main Horse Trail
- Main Pedestrian Trail
- Parking Area Boulder
- Canoe Place
- Main Horse Trail
- Trail Signage
- Main Pedestrian Trail
- Tent Camping Access Trail
- Rest Benches
- Orientation Node
- Camping Node
- Main Pedestrian Trail

LIMBO CREEK
MINNESOTA RIVER
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK: UPPER SHELTER

Design

The upper wayside rest area is redesigned. Its features include:

- An expanded and formalized turnaround and parking area is bounded by boulders,
- The space around the old sawmill ruins is formalized into a circle-shaped clearing, and benches and an interpretive sign are placed within it,
- Crushed rock edged with boulders is placed in a circular pattern around the existing shelter,
- Picnic tables and an interpretive sign area are placed on the crushed rock, and
- A new restroom is located northeast of the picnic area.
VICKSBURG COUNTY PARK

The 241-acre Vicksburg County Park is partially located on the site of the abandoned community of Vicksburg. This riverside park has ancient granite and gneiss outcroppings, several rustic campsites, a picnic shelter, a canoe and boat launch, and a picnic area. The county trail along County Road 6 connects the City of Renville to the Park and the future Minnesota River State Trail. The trailhead is located by the picnic shelter, restrooms, and parking lot at the park entrance.
BEAVER FALLS COUNTY PARK

Beaver Falls is a 302-acre county park south of Danube and Olivia and just north of the Minnesota River. It is characterized by a hardwood forest, scenic views, picturesque ravines, walking and horse trails, historic ruins, and a scenic creek that gently tumbles its way south to the Minnesota River through a rock-filled streambed. The Park is accessed by County Road 2, the road that bisects the Park into a northern section that has number of facilities including a horse camp and a southern section that accommodates rustic camping along Beaver Creek. The County Trail System does not go directly to the Park. The future Minnesota River Trail provides access to the Park; it enters Beaver Creek from the east and the west on an alignment parallel to County Road 2. The County Trail goes south from Danube along County Road 1 and south from Olivia along Highway 71 to meet the State Trail at County Road 2.
ANDERSON LAKE COUNTY PARK

Anderson Lake Park I is a 100-acre park on the western half of Anderson Lake. It is bounded by the Minnesota River on the south. It is a day park for fishing, canoeing, hiking, and picnicking. It is in a beautiful hardwood forest and has restrooms and a dock. Future hiking, cross county skiing, and snowshoeing are planned for the Park. The County Trail connection to the future Minnesota River State Trail alignment parallel to the Minnesota Scenic Byway (County Road 5) provides access to the Park.
MACK LAKE COUNTY PARK
Mack Lake Park is a small park that encircles Mack Lake. It is located between the bluff line and the Minnesota River along the Minnesota River Scenic Byway (County Road 5). Its amenities include campsites, a canoe launch, picnic tables, a picnic shelter, restrooms, and the Nesseth log cabin historic site. The County Trail connection to the future Minnesota River State Trail that will run parallel to the Minnesota Scenic Byway (County Road 5) provides access to the Park.
BIRCH COULEE COUNTY PARK

Birch Coulee County Park is a 25-acre park located at the intersection of County Road 2 and County Road 18 north of Morton and contiguous to the Birch Coulee Battlefield, the site of an important battle in 1862. The Park has a picturesque creek and valley, potable water, a picnic shelter with a beautiful stone fireplace, walking trails, restrooms, recreational vehicle campsites with electric hookups, and beautiful and historic stone walking bridge that crosses the creek. It accommodates picnics, rustic camping, and large gatherings. County Trail access to the park is along County Road 2 on the north. Access from the State Trail will be along 18 on the south.
LAKE ALLIE COUNTY PARK
This small park of 4.4 acres along Lake Allie’s lakeshore is in the northeastern corner of the county. Unlike the river shore parks, this park is not a rustic park. The Park has many amenities: a picnic shelter, vehicle campground, a fishing pier, a dock, a boat ramp, a playground, and restrooms.

The trailhead is located by the park entrance
SACRED HEART

Sacred Heart is the most western community in Renville County and one of its oldest. The ruins of the Joseph R. Brown House (1861) and the Lars Rudi House (1868) are located in the township. Hawk Creek, a seasonal canoe creek flows through it. It is sited along the railroad line and Highway 212 like its sister communities to the east.

Design

The County Trail comes into Sacred Heart from Skalbekken County Park on the west on a route parallel to Highway 212. Within Sacred Heart it jogs along Walnut Street before rejoining Highway 212 to go east to Renville and joining County Road 9 south to the Minnesota River State Trail.
Proposed County Trail
Proposed Trailhead
Sacred Heart Area Museum
RENVILLE

Renville is a community of 1300 people located a few miles west of Danube along Highway 212. Agribusiness dominates its economy. The home of the world’s largest sugar beet plant, the city is a service center for the soybeans, sugar beets, and corn produced on the large farms that surround it.

Design

The County Trail enters Renville from Sacred Heart on an alignment that parallels Highway 212. Within Renville it jogs to go along NE 3rd Street past the Renville County West School, passes the commercial center on County Road 31/ Main Street, loops around the eastern part of town on Dupont Avenue NE, 5th Street, and Park Avenue to the trailhead at City Park along Main Street. It leaves town on County Road 6 south to Vicksburg County Park and east to Danube on County Road 1.
Proposed County Trail
Proposed Trailhead

To Sacred Heart

To Vicksburg County Park #2 & Danube
DANUBE

Danube is a small community between Renville and Olivia. Voelz Park is the focus of many of the Danube Fun Days activities held in July.

Design

Danube is connected to Olivia to the east by a trail that parallels Highway 212 and to Renville by a route along County 1 road south and Highway 212 west. Within the community a local trail loop is sited on 2nd Street, Pine Street, Freedom Lane, and Oak Street. The trailhead is located north of County Road 1.
Proposed County Trail

Proposed Trailhead

To Renville

To Olivia

± 0 Feet

Oak Street
Pine Street
2nd Street
Freedom Ln
OLIVIA
Located along Highway 212 in the center of Renville County, Olivia is the county seat and the largest community in the County. Surrounded by acres of corn, sugar beets, and soybeans, it is a city of wide, tree-lined streets and a number of parks.

Design
County trail comes into Olivia from Danube on the west side of Olivia on 820th Avenue and leaves the town on the east side paralleling Highway 212 to connect to Bird Island. From the south the trail parallels Highway 71 creates a loop on the Pine Avenue, then takes a jog north on 9th Street to enter the trailhead located in the Nester Park. The northern trail loop follows 11th Street, then goes east onto Elm Street, north on 9th Street, and comes back south on 7th Street to follow Depue Avenue in the eastern part of the town to exit to paralleling Highway 212 to Bird Island.
Proposed County Trail

Proposed Trailhead

Alternate Proposed County Trails Through Private Land

To Bird Island

To Birch Coulee County Park #5

To Danube

To Nester Park

To Henton Park
OLIVIA: NESTER PARK TRAILHEAD

Each year in July Nester Park is a focus of Olivia’s annual Corn Days, a festival event that brings the city and county residents and visitors together to celebrate Renville County’s prominence as the “Corn Capitol of the World.” The Corn Days parade route goes by Nester Park, and a very popular two-day corn feed with music is held in the Park. The proposed design changes to Nester Park adds new features to the existing trees and park elements to accommodate Corn Days activities and create a year-round reminder of the importance of corn to the economy and culture of the County.

Design

The new design features include:

- A welcome sign;
- Bicycle racks;
- An information kiosk that features the drawing of Olivia, a description of the town’s history and culture, and an area for posting upcoming events;
- A corn maze children’s garden that incorporates the current bell area and adds benches;
- Native prairie plantings that remind park users of the native vegetation that was part of Olivia’s original landscape;
- A community plaza in front of the existing shelter and under the existing shade trees that serves as a focal point for Corn Day activities such as the corn feed and band concert and at other times for family/visitor recreation. Its features include:
  - Multi-purpose tables and seating elements,
  - Plantings, and
  - Modular plaza pavers with corn designs on their surfaces.
OLIVIA: NESTER PARK TRAILHEAD

- Flower Plantings
- Children’s Maze Garden
- Prairie Plantings
- Garden Pathway
- Existing Park Welcome Sign
- Existing Shelter
- Multipurpose Tables
- Pervious Pavement with Corn Imprints
- Plantings with Seating
- Information Kiosk
- Existing Trees
- Bicycle Racks
- Welcome Sign
BIRD ISLAND

Bird Island was settled in 1878. It is named for an island with many trees surrounded by wetlands that attracted thousands of birds. The wetlands have been drained, the former wetlands are rich farm fields, and the former island is no longer a gathering place for birds. The former island and its wetlands are remembered with tongue-in-cheek humor. Residents can join the Bird Island Yacht Club. During Bird Island Wing Ding Days, the community celebration in June, the parade is called the Bird Island Regatta Parade. The parade route winds through the streets of town past the park and the Renville County Fairgrounds.

Design

The trail plan locates Bird Island at an intersection of the Renville County Trail System. The trail goes west to Olivia south along the drainage ditches or parallel to Highway 212 south along County Road 5 to Franklin, and parallel to Highway 212 to Hector. Trail features in Bird Island include:

- Access: City residents can access the trail on neighborhood streets, and trail uses can easily reach the businesses on Main Street and the fairgrounds.

- Use of current facilities: the trailhead is located in Shaw Park between Main Street, Dogwood, Elm, and 6th Street just north of the county fairgrounds. The park has a picnic shelter and rest facilities.

- Trailhead accommodates current community activities: Shaw Park is a good place to watch the Regatta Parade and a good place to park bikes while attending the county fair.
Proposed County Trail
Proposed Trailhead
Alternate Proposed County Trails Through Private Land

To Hector
To Olivia
To Franklin
To Olivia
BIRD ISLAND: SHAW’S PARK TRAILHEAD

Design
The trailhead is located in the southeastern corner of the park at Elm Street and Sixth Street west of the basketball court and the horseshoe courts by the picnic shelter. The design features include:

- Existing trees are supplemented by an arc of crabapple trees that enclose the area on the northwest,
- A plaza of permeable paving surrounds the existing picnic shelter,
- Multipurpose tables and an information kiosk placed on the paving,
- Bicycle racks.
Crabapple Trees
Existing Shelter
Bicycle Racks
Permeable Paving
Multipurpose Tables
Information Kiosk
Existing Garden Area
Existing Sidewalk/
Proposed County
Trail Connection

Existing
Basketball

Existing
Horseshoes

6 TH STREET

ELM AVENUE

BIRD ISLAND: SHAW’S PARK TRAILHEAD
HECTOR

Hector is located on Highway 212 and the rail line. The city is located at the intersection of the trail to Bird Island to the west, Buffalo Lake to the east, and Fairfax to the south. Special places in Hector include the Frandsen Bank & Trust building (1916) originally the Farmers and Merchants State Bank, printing plant, and office building. Located the corner of Main Street and Birch Avenue, this bank is designed in the prairie school style by Purcell & Elmslie, an architectural firm that were leaders in the prairie school movement. The Prairie School is an important style of architecture that was created in the Midwest. It rejected European style architecture based on the classical orders of columns to express American democracy and the character of the prairie landscape. Ornamentation of terra cotta portraying wheat, flowers, etc is part of its signature aesthetic. The Hector Historical Society Museum is also a special place. It features objects from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its collection features early telephone equipment. Remnants of the historic Yellowstone Trail, one of the first tourist roads to cross the continent, are also found in Hector.

Design

The county trail heads south along 5th Avenue to 2nd street to the City Park trailhead by the pavilion before passing by the restrooms and curving around the outer edges of the ball field to head further south along State Highway 4 to Fairfax, the FairRidge Trail, Fort Ridgely State Park, and the Minnesota River. Another trail segment heads east either north of town or parallel to Highway 212. The trail design in Hector has:

- Two potential east-west alignments in order to more closely follow the alignment of the historic Yellowstone Road and remove the trail from busy Highway 212, and
- Access to the downtown businesses and the historic bank and museum.
Proposed Trailhead

Proposed County Trail

To Bird Island

To Bird Island

To Buffalo Lake

To Buffalo Lake

To Fairfax

Proposed County Trail Adjacent to Unpaved Road

Nationally Registered Historic Site
HECTOR: TRAILHEAD

Design

The features of the park trailhead include:

- A paved trail that transverses the park from its northwest corner to its southeast corner,
- Flowering trees that mark the trail’s northern entry into the park,
- Rows of conifers that screen the ball field and mark the southern entry,
- A permeable paved plaza that defines an outdoor gathering place next to the pavilion,
- Bicycle parking off of the trail adjacent to the plaza, and
- An information kiosk that provides information about the city, the historical museum, the Yellowstone Road, and the prairie school architecture found in the bank building.
BUFFALO LAKE

Design
The County Trail reaches Buffalo Lake from Hector by a route that parallels Highway 212 or a more northern route that follows County Road 8. Within the City it goes on County Road 8 to the trailhead in City Park. It leaves the Buffalo Lake along County Road 8 north to Lake Allie County Park.
Proposed County Trail

Proposed Trailhead

Proposed County Trail Adjacent to Unpaved Road
BUFFALO LAKE: TRAILHEAD

Design
The Buffalo Lake Trailhead is in City Park, a city park located on a trapezoidal shaped block bounded by Highway 212, Main Street, Park Avenue, and 3rd Street in the southeastern corner of Buffalo Lake. The bike trail winds through the Park. The features of the park include:

- A rest area of permeable paving
- An information kiosk
- Bicycle racks, and
- An improved car parking facilities
Event Places for Fish Houses & Snowmobiles
Existing Playground
Existing Tennis
Existing Pavillion
Information Kiosk
Permeable Paving
Bicycle Trail
Bicycle Parking
Event Parking

BUFFALO LAKE 79E
FAIRFAX
Design
The County Trail enters Fairfax from Franklin on the west on a route that parallels Highway 19 and Hector from the north along County Road 4. It intersects the FairRidge Trail at the FairRidge Trailhead at County Road 28 and 3rd Street. The State Trail goes south to Fort Ridgely State Park. The FairRidge Trail connects the county system to the State Park. Because Fairfax has a trailhead, no separate trailhead for the County Trail is needed; however a sign with a map of the County Trail System should be erected at the State Trail’s trailhead.
Proposed County Trail
Proposed Trailhead
FairRidge Trail

To Hector
To Franklin
To Sibley County
To Fort Ridgely State Park

1st Avenue SE
3rd Street SW
3rd Street
4th Street SE
2nd Avenue
FRANKLIN

Design
East-west and north-south trails intersect in Franklin. The County Trail enters the City from Morton on the west along Highway 19 and leaves it on the east parallel to Highway 19 to Fairfax. Within the Franklin the trail jogs to follow 1st Street going south, then east on 1st Avenue, intersects with County Road 29, and goes north on 7th Street to connect to County Road 19. It intersects with the future State Trail along County Road 5 to go south to Anderson and Mack Lake County Parks and to cross the Minnesota River to Redwood County.
MORTON

Design
Morton, home of the Renville County Historical Society and several historic sites, is a very old community. It is located three miles south of the Birch Coulee Battlefield at the intersection of U. S. Highway 71 and State Highway 19. Olivia is connected by road to the Minnesota River at Morton. The county trail comes from the north paralleling County Road 18, it intersects with the Minnesota River State Trail at State Highway 19 before it ends at the banks of the Minnesota River.
Proposed County Trail
Proposed Trailhead
Future State Trail

Nationally Registered Historic Site

To Vicksburg County Park #2
To Redwood Falls
To St. Cornelia's Church
To Birch Coulee Battlefield Site
To Lower Sioux Agency Site
To Birch Coulee Monument
Loyal Indian Monument
To Birch Coulee School

Renville County History Museum

Wayside Park
Birch Coulee School

MORTON
MORTON: TRAILHEAD

Design

The Morton trailhead is sited in Morton Wayside Park. Permeable pavers are added to the area by the picnic shelter to make an outdoor space with an information kiosk, a bike rack, and multiuse tables.
SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

The Logo
The Renville County Trail logo depicts the county’s major natural and cultural features:

- The Minnesota River
- Creeks,
- Lakes: and
- Its communities: Olivia, Bird Island, Morgan, etc.

Trail Signs
- Signs marking the trail route will have the logo and the words “Renville Trail.” The signs will be attached to metal posts.
- Additional signs may be attached beneath the trail sign that direct trail users to a picnic shelter, water, and other amenities.
- Trail signs made with wood posts are a variety of sizes:
  - Small signs on a single post mark the way,
  - Square signs with two posts have two surfaces to provide information about a particular site, and
  - Larger rectangular signs provide surfaces for information about the community.
CAMPGROUND POLICIES

1. A campsite may be occupied by:
   A. A family using one shelter, and an additional shelter with prior approval of the Park Manager. A family consists of a father and/or mother accompanied by their children.
   B. Any group of six or less using one shelter for sleep.
   C. Campers under 18 must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian.

2. Registered campers are required to have all visitors out of the campground by 10:00 PM. Campers are encouraged to keep the number of visitors to a minimum, for campground safety reasons and in order to provide a pleasant camping experience to all registered campers.

3. Management reserves the right to require any camper or visitor to leave the campground upon violation of park (campground) rules.

4. Firewood is available for purchase through the Park Manager from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Fee: Five (5) pieces for $1.00.

5. No person shall use a public address system, amplifier or power equipment, or otherwise make noise of a volume tending reasonably to arouse alarm, anger, or resentment in other park users. Contact the Park Manager for permitted use of such equipment.

6. In the campground area, the hours between 10:00 PM and 8:00 AM are for outdoor solitude, and it shall be unlawful to make noise at a level above that of a quiet conversation.

7. Use of firearms, etc. is prohibited.

8. Trenching or digging in the campground is not allowed.

9. Pets must be leashed.

10. Don’t litter. Place trash in containers.

11. Any misuse of intoxicating liquors will result in expulsion from the campground.

12. A person’s possession and use of drugs shall be in accordance with state laws.

BROWN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

LAKE HANSKA COUNTY PARK

Lake Hanska County Park is located on the east shore of the largest lake in Brown County, seventeen miles south of New Ulm.

Historically, humans lived on this site a long time ago. Archaeologists have studied the area and by the items found in their excavations determined that pre-historic hunting people occupied this place from about 500 B.C. to 1000 A.D. Then agricultural tribes lived here from that period to the time of contact with Europeans.

In the late 1850’s, Norwegian immigrants moved into the area after the Dakota (or Sioux) Indians had moved to the reservations. The hills proved to be an ideal place for a fort, constructed of sod and logs, to help protect settlers in 1863, after the Uprising in 1862. Soldiers of the Ninth Minnesota Regiment were stationed here for many months. This spot is now called Fort Hill, which rises about 70 above the lake level.

PARK AND CAMPGROUND FACILITIES

Free Use of County Park’s

- Picnic Areas & Hiking Trails
- Cross-Country Skiing Trails

CAMPING FEES

TENT CAMPING AREA
Rate: $10.00 per site

PRIMITIVE CAMPING AREA
Rate: $9.00 per site (Munson Point)

TRAILER CAMPING AREA*
Rate: $20.00 per site
For use of Trailer Sanitation Station, contact Resident Park Caretaker at 507-439-6411

Registered campers: No fee
Non-campers: $7.00

CAMPING RESERVATIONS
$5.00 – call 507-439-6411

ALL ABOVE FEES ARE TAX INCLUSIVE

PICNIC SHELTER RESERVATIONS – Contact County Park Coordinator Phone 507-233-6640

Lake Hanska County Park is open all year (Daily 8:00 AM-10:00 PM). The campground is open from mid-May to late September. The campground building contains flush toilets and hot showers. The Park contains paved walkways leading to the picnic shelters, along with other features making the facility handicapped accessible.
**SIGNATURE ELEMENTS**

**Trail Kiosks**
The kiosks reflect the agricultural heritage of the county. Two designs are proposed. One recalls the shape of the historic grain elevators, the other the contemporary grain storage bins. Both designs can be incorporated into a rest area. Trail kiosks and signs will be placed at trailheads and at significant locations along the trail.

Because Renville County and Redwood County are working together to promote their counties as recreational areas, the counties may wish to use the same kiosk design.

Information presented on the kiosk panels include:
- A trail map depicting trail features;
- A community drawing/map showing community features with a “You are here” locator icon;
- Community pictures;
- The landscape’s natural and cultural features;
- Historical and other cultural information: settlement, historic photos, town histories, etc.;
- Challenges to early settlers: grasshoppers, prairie fires, blizzards;
- Northwest Ordinance 1785 & 1862 Homestead Act;
- The Jeffersonian grid land divisions: 6 mile square townships, sections, 160 acre quarter sections;
- County’s gridded pattern: townships, roads, drainage ditches, field drain tiles;
- Geology;
- Land cover & Vegetation: prairie plants, etc.;
- Rivers & Watersheds;
- Hydrology;
- Wind: summer & winter patterns;
- Native Americans;
- Railroads; and
- Farms: area economy, history, changes, etc.

The signature plazas used in the larger trailheads are made of modular pavers in a five-foot by five-foot modular pattern set in sand on an aggregate base. They do not contribute to storm water runoff because their construction permits water to infiltrate.

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**Plaza Pavement Modules**

- Water Infiltration
- Modular Unit Pavers
- 1/8” Tight & Swept Joints
- 1” Sand Setting Bed
- Filter Fabric
- 6” Aggregate Base
- 12” Open Aggregate Base
- Prepared Subgrade
Kiosk

Kiosk with Seating & Shelter

Kiosk with Seating & Shelter
SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

Rest Stops

Rest stops can be located in parks and other public areas along the trail. The design drawings show two conditions for rest stops. One is for a flat terrain, another for a sloping site. The rest stop features:

- A windbreak of conifers and deciduous trees and shrubs,
- Bicycle racks,
- An information kiosk, and
- A resting bench shaded by willows.
SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

Trail Trail Sign

Windbreak Coniferous and Decidious Trees and shrubs

Native Stone Bike Racks Information Kiosk

Resting bench Field