

Ozarks Regional Bicycle Destination Plan



Executive Summary

Bicycle tourism is a rapidly growing form of vacation travel. States, counties, and cities across America are increasingly promoting themselves as bicycle tourist destinations, often under the umbrella of "ecotourism."

In 2014, Ozark Greenways developed a bicycle destination plan for Greene County. The plan highlights why Greene County can succeed as a bicycle tourism destination. The plan provides strategies for marketing and way-finding. Specific locations are identified and routes named to promote various destinations. Mountain biking and special events are also addressed.

In 2018, the Ozarks Transportation Organization worked with the communities of Christian County to expand the destination plan for the OTO region. An additional route and various destinations in northern Christian County have been identified for inclusion in the plan.

Ecotourism

The practice of touring natural habitats in a manner to minimize ecological impact (Merriam-Webster). The OTO region boasts four National Recreation Trails:

- Frisco Highline Trail
- Galloway Creek Greenway
- South Creek Greenway
- Wilson's Creek Greenway



"Bicycling is the second most popular outdoor activity in the United States by frequency of participation. In 2015, Americans aged 6 and older went on 2.7 billion bicycle outings."

- THE OUTDOOR FOUNDATION

Executive Summary

Recommendations

- Seek public and private partners and funding to permanently sign the routes identified in this plan.
- Partner and invest in efforts to improve and market the Frisco Highline Trail as a regional destination trail.
- Work with the communities of Christian County to sign and improve designated cycling routes to ensure a safe experience for future cycling tourists.
- Provide area communities and chambers of commerce a copy of this Plan with information on how they can better position their communities to be welcoming to bicyclists.



OTO and Ozark Greenways

Ozark Greenways

The mission of Ozark Greenways is to build a trail system that connects and enhances the community. Since 1991, they have been guided by a plan for over 120 miles of greenway trails throughout the Springfield Community.



Ozarks Transportation Organization

The OTO is the transportation planning organization for the Springfield metropolitan area. The mission of OTO is to provide a forum for cooperative decision-making in support of an excellent regional transportation system. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are charged with maintaining and conducting a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive" regional transportation planning and project programming process for the MPO's study area. The study area is defined as the area projected to become urbanized within the next 20 years.



Introduction

Bicycle tourism is a rapidly growing form of vacation travel that has become a significant economic resource in the U.S. and around the world. States, counties, and cities across America are increasingly promoting themselves as bicycle tourist destinations, often under the umbrella of "ecotourism."

The Ozarks Transportation Organization region, including Christian and Greene Counties, in southwest Missouri, are in a prime position to be promoted as a bicycle tourist destination. The area is well known for its beautiful scenery, fascinating history and culture, and for its friendly citizens. Combined with the area's excellent on-road and off-road biking infrastructure, these factors create a perfect opportunity to attract riders of all ages and skill levels.

Bicycle tourism can bring vast benefits to Christian and Greene Counties. Recent studies show that bicycle vacationers spend more on food and lodging than do those who travel by car. Not only do these active, curious tourists spend more dollars, they spend them at local businesses.

In a time when communities are working to distinguish themselves as unique destinations, the time is right to think creatively about new attractions that can stand-out and diversify economic returns for the region. Bicycle tourism has the potential to being a new and unique source of income to the area. A wide variety of businesses will benefit - from restaurants and hotels to bike-specific enterprises such as equipment, rental, bike park, and touring companies. The sales tax generated from cycling tourists offer a new revenue stream for the cities and counties that create the infrastructure to attract them.

This plan highlights the successes of other communities in becoming bicycle tourist destinations and showcases the opportunities this region can capitalize to prosper from this form of travel. The natural beauty of the Ozarks, when combined with scenic routes, way-finding signage, and good road infrastructure already in place, puts the region in position to take advantage of this growing trend.

"Bicycling is an important element of the Quad Cities tourism promotion. One hundred miles of trail connect the MRT and ADT systems. The 18,000 riders on RAGBRAI ended their ride in Davenport, IA in 2011, so we know bicycle tourism puts heads in beds."

- JOE TAYLOR, PRESIDENT QUAD CITIES CVB

Fast Facts

As of 2012, outdoor recreation accounted for \$646 billion in annual spending in the U.S., which supported 6.1 million direct jobs and \$80 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues.

- OUTDOOR INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION



The Plan

The Ozarks Regional Bicycle Destination Plan showcases the potential of the region as a destination for bicycle tourism. This includes the identification and promotion of the region's natural and cultural attractions to cyclists, as well as an analysis of trends and the impact of rural-based eco-tourism.

This workable implementation plan capitalizes on the foundation of existing infrastructure, including routes, transportation systems, and community support.

The plan includes the region's growing 76-mile greenway trail network; Springfield's growing 96 mile on-street bike route system; the area's top-notch mountain biking trails; eight nationally designated bike trails and proposed touring routes; Greene County's completely paved road system; and the paved roads of Christian County.

This Bicycle Destination Plan:

- Accounts for and utilizes the current and future greenway trail and on-street connections to area attractions and points of interest.
- Provides current demographics and destination tourism trends, specifically for bicycle ecotourism.
- Provides examples of similar communities that have undertaken such initiatives.
- Provides examples of way-finding signage systems to identify and direct users to specific routes.
- Coordinates with Christian and Greene Counties to identify a way-finding system that can be executed by all parties, and identify costs.
- Integrates outlying communities as destinations where appropriate.

- Incorporates public participation through potential public and private partners, such as jurisdictions, Chambers of Commerce, visitor centers, historic sites and boards, the National Parks Service, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.
- Considers the public health benefits.
- Includes 5-7 proposals for themed destination routes with descriptions, specific directions, levels of difficulty, and route maps.
- Identifies possible partners and events that might act as a catalyst for the promotion of the routes.
- Provides recommendations for the best methods of public information sharing.
- Recommends initiatives to promote and encourage use by residents and visitors.
- Identifies future route possibilities with general descriptions that could be used if funding becomes available.



"Bicycling in the U.S. increased by 46 percent from 2009 to 2012."

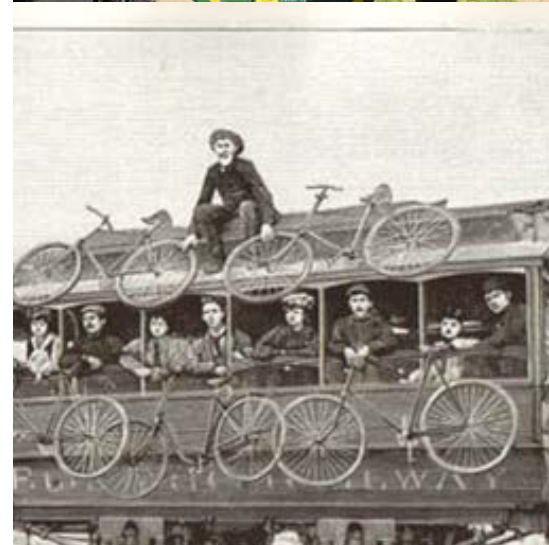
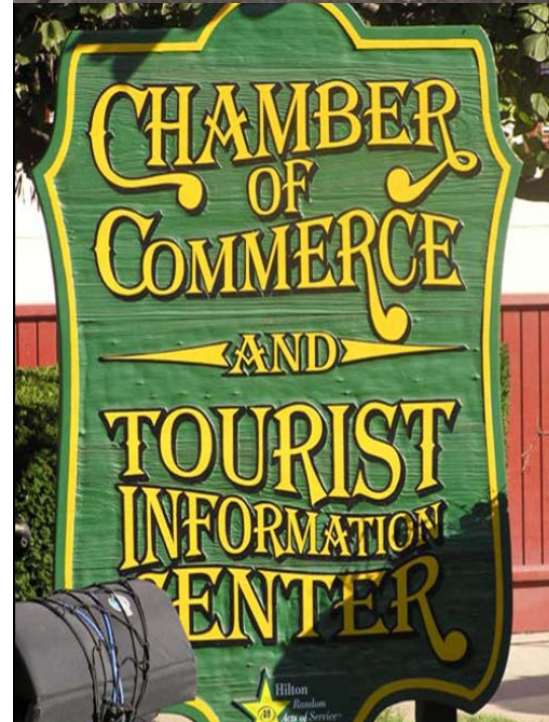
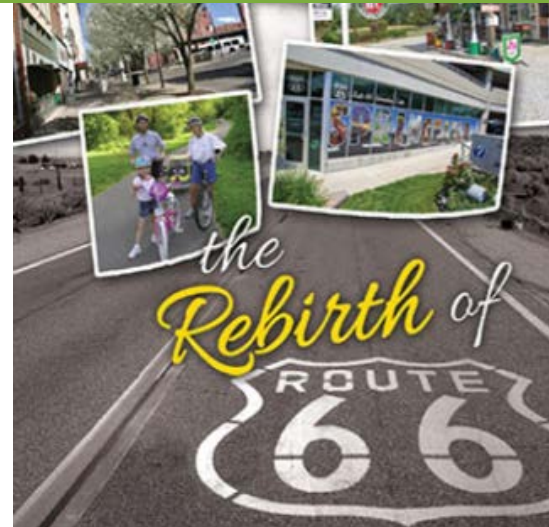
- LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS

History of Bicycle Tourism

Ever since the bicycle was invented in the 1800s, people have toured the countryside as a leisure activity. Yet it wasn't until the last twenty years that bicycle tourism reached a following enough to be worthy of serious consideration and promotion as an economic resource. Bicycle tourism has been increasing at an even more rapid pace over the past ten years because the sport's appeal is catching on with both tourists and community leaders.

This growing segment can be explained by the presence of several variables:

- Once considered too adventurous for the average person, or only accessible to those with special knowledge or abilities, bicycling has been demystified. It is now attracting a much broader and more varied range of participants.
- Cities are developing and improving biking infrastructure, including on-street bike routes, greenway trails, and well-maintained county road systems. This increased accessibility is one of the main reasons average people now feel more comfortable with bicycle tourism and are much more likely to explore using these resources.
- Current trends toward a more active lifestyle are carrying over to the kinds of vacations people choose. This is the case for young adults as well as for families and senior citizens.
- More communities around the country are promoting bicycling as a tourist activity in their area as a complement to existing tourist attractions and unique features of the local landscape.
- According to peopleforbikes.org, more than three times as many new bicycles are sold each year than cars in the U.S. In 2010, there were 14.9 million bikes sold compared to 4.6 million cars sold.
- Public transit has become more bike-friendly as well. Bike racks that are easy to use have been installed on the fronts of city buses across the country, including the City Utilities Transit System.



"Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of a bike ride."

- JOHN F. KENNEDY

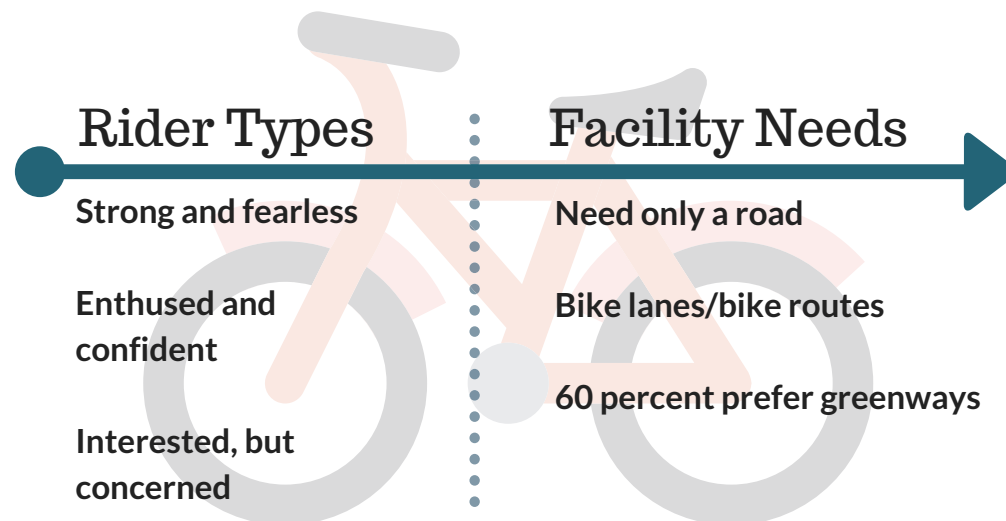
The Bicycle Tourist

Bicycling tourist can be categorized into various market segments in several different ways. The terms used in this plan are derived from the "Cycle Tourism Assessment and Strategy," from the Regional Tourism Organization Region 8 of Ontario, Canada.

Bicycle Tourists can be divided by both the frequency and intensity of their journeys. They identify four classes of cycling tourists: occasional riders, short distance riders, long distance riders, and competitive riders.

These categories can be further differentiated by demographics, frequency, distance, speed, motivation, preferred location, and lodging preferences. All of these factors need to be considered in the development of a bicycling tourism campaign.

As more people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds are attracted to the different models of cycling, these categories will expand and adapt. Fortunately, whether cyclists prefer urban trail riding, country road riding, or mountain biking, the OTO region truly has something to satisfy everyone.



"To my mind, the greatest reward and luxury of travel is to be able to experience everyday things as if for the first time, to be in a position in which almost nothing is so familiar it is taken for granted."

- BILL BRYSON, INTRO TO THE BEST AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITING 2000

The Bicycle Tourist

Occasional Riders

Demographic:

Young adults, families with children, and mature adults; rides with family, friends, and sometimes children

Frequency:

Ride sporadically, a few times a year

Distance:

Five to ten miles, up to an hour or two

Speed:

Slower speeds, frequent stops, 10-12 mph

Motivation:

Fitness, fun, family time, social activity

Location:

Paths or sidewalks close to home, parks, or recreational areas

Lodging:

Everything from camping to nice hotels, depending on other planned trip activities

Negatives:

Dislike riding with motor vehicles, hills

Short Distance Riders

Demographic:

All ages, including adults and retirees; rides with family, friends, groups, or solo

Frequency:

Weekly and/or monthly rides

Distance:

Day-ride distances of 15-20 miles

Speed:

Slower to medium, frequent stops, 12-20 mph

Motivation:

Fitness, fun, family time, social activity

Location:

Rail trails, paths, or roads with low volumes of motor vehicle traffic; mostly near home with occasional longer group trips; organized rides (including international) with arrangements for bicycles, accommodations, and luggage

Lodging:

Affordable accommodations - economical motels and restaurants; expanding to all types of lodging

Negatives:

Hilly roads with motor vehicle traffic, particularly no paved shoulders

The Bicycle Tourist

Long Distance Riders

Demographic:

Young and mature adults, retirees; rides with grown children, family, group, or solo

Frequency:

Ride frequently, weekly or monthly

Distance:

Day-ride distances of 40-60+ miles

Speed:

Medium/top speeds, few stops, 15-25 mph

Motivation:

Fitness and/or joy of the experience

Location:

Trails and paved roads with low traffic volumes and paved shoulders; rolling topography; multi-day rides solo or with others, close to home or on vacation; might travel to ride internationally for pleasure and a challenge

Lodging:

Accommodation and meals match budget, often the best available

Negatives:

Find trails boring and crowded

Competitive Riders

Demographic:

Young to mature adults in groups or solo

Frequency:

Regular training to maintain fitness level, multi-day rides solo or with others, club rides

Distance:

Day-ride distances of 60-100+ miles

Speed:

Top speeds, stops when necessary, 25 mph+

Motivation:

Fitness, joy of the experience, competitive challenge

Location:

Paved roads with low motor vehicle traffic and good paved shoulders; challenging topography in terms of distance and hills

Lodging:

Affordable choices for groups - colleges, budget motels, camping

Negatives:

Ozarks Greenways trails are not designed for higher speed riders

Why the OTO Region?

Both Christian and Greene Counties in Missouri are named for Revolutionary War soldiers, William Christian and Nathanael Greene, respectively. The region is rich with cultural and historic significance, as well as green rolling hills, pastoral fields of lush crops and hardy livestock, and cultivated areas intermix with lovely streams, springs, lakes, caves, and public open space. Area leaders should continue promoting wise use of the region's natural resources, striving for a balance between man-made development and open space preservation for future generations.

Christian County is comprised of 564 square miles of land. The County Commission and an additional six road districts maintain the roads throughout Christian County. Greene County is comprised of 678 square miles of land, served by a 3,000-mile system of paved county roads, maintained by the Greene County Highway Department. The OTO region does not cover all of these two counties and any routes recommended in this plan are on paved roads.

Several factors make the OTO region perfect for bicyclists of varying skill levels. The location of the touring sites in this plan are either inside or fairly close to the Springfield metropolitan area services and lodging. The area is home to four National Recreation Trails, as designated by the National Park Service; a water trail on the James River for canoeing and kayaking right through Springfield; Busiek State Forest; and the national cross-country bike route, the Trans-America Trail.

Existing Infrastructure

The OTO region has 76 miles of greenway trail and Springfield 96 miles of an interconnecting network of on-street bike routes. This includes marked routes and bike lanes, as well as other cyclist-friendly amenities developing throughout the community. There are opportunities for road biking, mountain biking, touring, commuting, or greenway cruising with the family. All public roads in Greene County are paved with asphalt or



Fast Facts

Trails are important to tourism in Iowa. Each year, an estimated 610,000 people use the Cedar River Trails, a 100-mile network of hard-surfaced trails. Some 17 percent of these cyclists come from outside the area. Those 103,700 visitors spend an estimated \$2,592,500 per year.

- THE IOWA TOURISM OFFICE AND
TRAVEL FEDERATION OF IOWA

"Southwest Missouri is primed to take advantage of the increasing interest in bicycle tourism."

- KATIE STEELE DANNER, DIRECTOR OF THE MISSOURI DIVISION OF TOURISM

Why the OTO Region?

concrete, which is ideal for cycling. The County is only one of three in the State of Missouri to boast this claim (St. Louis County and Kansas City's Jackson County are the other two). In the last 25 years, nearly every bridge in Greene County has been repaired or replaced, or is awaiting repairs. Site distances and geometrics have been modernized for safety at intersections, curves, and hills.

Motor vehicle traffic volumes in unincorporated areas of the OTO region are minimal, but as one might expect, volumes intensify as the transition is made from a rural to an urban setting.

Significant improvements have been and continue to be made with the City of Springfield's designated bike lanes and routes on primary and secondary arterials throughout the corporate city limits.

Pavement and shoulder widths comply with both state and federal guidelines for roadway categories. Both the City of Springfield and Greene County also comply with their respective design standards for public improvements. In addition, Christian and Greene Counties, and the metropolitan jurisdictions are active members of the OTO.

Road and Trail gradients follow the natural features of the Ozarks. The terrain, dominated by limestone and dolomite rock formations, has a pronounced karst topography. That means there are many challenging "hills and hollers" for bicycle enthusiasts to enjoy.

The nationally designated cross-country Trans-America Trail travels through the northern part of Greene County. An alternate TA route through Springfield has been proposed and should be promoted to attract the ongoing flow of touring cyclists into the Springfield area as they make their way through this part of the Ozarks. U.S. Bike Route 66 does intersect with the Trans-America Trail in Marshfield, following Historic Route 66 through Springfield.

Cultural/Historical Attractions

Historic structures and sites within Christian and Greene Counties can be identified by consulting a variety of sources: the Springfield-Greene County Library, the Christian County Library, the History Museum on the Square, Missouri State University, and other local and online resources. Local historical sites and events include Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, Route 66, the Trail of Tears, the Butterfield Stagecoach, and Smallin Cave.

Natural Features

Rivers, lakes, springs, and caves are plentiful throughout the Ozarks region. Popular rivers for canoeing and kayaking include the James River Water



City Utilities and the Greene County Highway Department preserved McDaniel Lake bridge for use as a bicycling connection.

Why the OT0 Region?

Trail, cutting right through the east side of Springfield. Others include the Little Sac River, Pomme de Terre River, Finley River, and adjacent tributaries. Terminal reservoirs include Fellows Lake, McDaniel Lake, Springfield Lake, and Valley Water Mill at the Watershed Educational Center. Caves and other karst features are prevalent throughout. A recent inventory counted more than 2,500 caves in the Ozarks.

The most well-known commercial cave is Fantastic Caverns, one of four ride-through caves in the world and the only all riding cave tour in North America. The area also contains the oldest known fossil cave in North America, Riverbluff Cave, a non-commercial cave discovered in 2001. Smallin Cave was home to Osage Indians and possibly members of the Cherokee Tribe. There is evidence it was also used for Civil War activities. The first cave to be documented in the Ozarks, Smallin Cave is home to several endangered species. Almost all these sites are easily accessible via bicycle.

Year-Long Seasonal Beauty

There are four distinct seasons in the Ozarks, and each one offers beautiful scenery and unique characteristics to both visitors and residents. The weather is famously changeable, but typically moderate, so biking can be enjoyed year round.

Spring and fall can be particularly spectacular with jaw-dropping wildflowers and some of the best fall foliage colors in the country. Winter typically has many warm days intermixed and summer is always a great time to get outdoors and explore the region.



Why the OT0 Region?

Road Character

The initial routing and design of the county roads in the region were developed as the "path of least resistance" around and through the landscape. Technology improved our ability to execute road development as the straightest line between two points, allowing road-builders to bulldoze through the physical environment. Today, hilltops are leveled and valleys filled, while bluffs are blasted, rather than skirting the edge and flowing with the natural topography of the land. As a result, road networks become straight-lined, checker-board grids.

A grid system of roads is efficient for auto travel in terms of time, safety, and way-finding. Tourists, and especially touring cyclists, however, are more attracted by rolling hills; seductive curves; short, intimate stream crossings with bridge architecture that denotes a special sense of place; and helpful indications that a specific location is of local importance.

As opposed to auto travelers, cyclists are attracted to narrow roads with serial twists and curves that do not allow for long views of what is ahead, but rather inspire speculation as to just what might lie around the next turn. A good bicycle route encourages the possibility of surprise and adventure, and promises the hope of a new discovery around every corner or atop the next hill.

National examples of this road design exist with the Natchez Trace (photo right) and the Blue Ridge Parkways. They both utilize roads that were designed within the landscape and are scenic, safe, attractive, and used by both cyclists and vehicles.

When preserving, enhancing, or creating new roadways in the area, long-term ecotourism opportunities should be considered. Officials should avoid allowing the landscape to become so ordinary and roadways so schematic, that the natural features of the Ozarks become invisible to locals and indistinguishable to visitors.

The Christian and Greene County road systems have been able to maintain this natural flow and yet provide the safety and connectivity supportive of bicycle tourism.

Natchez Trace - Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee



Marketing Strategies

Attracting Tourists

Making a community bike-friendly is only the first step in attracting bicycle tourists. The second is to implement a comprehensive strategic marketing plan that reaches the intended audience.

First challenge is to identify the market. Earlier, this plan examined the demographics and categories of potential cycling tourist. Now, it is time to ask: What type of people would be drawn to the OTO region for a short bike ride, a long ride, or a multi-day trip? How are experiences tailored to appeal to the various types of cyclists. The target groups overlap, but each of them has a unique set of needs and expectations.

Second challenge is to identify a list of regional assets that would be the most effective to promote in conjunction with specific biking routes. The Ozarks has plenty of attractions to choose from, and these will be outlined later. Developing ongoing local partnerships at these locations will help ensure the ongoing success of the program and the shared economic benefits that will result.

Third challenge is to use effective marketing tools to promote this unique new form of tourism, making all its features and components sound enticing. Emphasizing the friendly Ozarkian hospitality will also enhance the appeal of the area. Eventually, positive biking experiences will lead to positive word-of-mouth, which is an invaluable resource for promotion.

Suggested Marketing Tools

- **Website:** user- and mobile-friendly, contains all info
- **Route Maps:** mobile-friendly, print from website
- **Printed Pamphlet:** printable from website
- **Logo:** use on all promo items to create a brand
- **Social Media:** encourages word-of-mouth, sharing
- **Links on Relevant Websites:** local, regional, national
- **Visitor's Guide Listing:** printed and online
- **Business-Card Size Ad:** printed cards and media ads
- **Route Signage:** small, large, logo, consistent brand
- **Magazine Ads and Guides:** local, regional, national
- **TV and Radio:** personal-interest stories and PSAs
- **Poster Ads:** in strategic locations, bike shops, CVB



"It is generally assumed that tourism is good, that ecotourism is best, and that bicycle tourism is at or near the top of the list of ecotourism."

~ DAVID MOZER, INTERNATIONAL BICYCLE FUND

Marketing Strategies

Make it Easy with a Website

A website is the most important marketing tool, providing a convenient source of information for tourists. Unlike printed material, which is updated only periodically, websites can be updated frequently and are accessible anytime from anywhere. The website should be very easy to use and mobile-friendly. It should be as comprehensive as possible, including all information and services useful for planning a ride, identifying services and attractions located along or close to the designated routes.

Website Contents:

- Printable **bike route maps** with cue sheets are
- the number one piece of information a cyclist
- seeks. They should show designated routes,
- trailheads, rest stops, places to refuel,
- wayfinding, mileage, and elevation.
- Link to **lodging options** that are available is also
- crucial, including everything from nice hotels
- and bed and breakfasts to budget motels and
- camping.
- **Restaurants** that are located along the bike
- routes are ideal for cycling tourists to choose
- from, but providing a wider list from the area is
- also good.
- Links to other **area attractions**, entertainment,
- arts, festivals, shopping, and various outdoor
- activities.
- Area **bike shop information** is important. They
- provide supplies and can fix mechanical
- problems.

Provide a Quality Experience

Environment and Atmosphere:

An experience that matches or exceeds expectations is the best way to bring tourists back and encourage them to spread the word. Regions that provide something above the norm, something pleasantly unexpected, will be more likely to increase tourism. Most traditional tourism in the U.S. revolves around energy-intensive motor vehicle travel to destinations offering a primary activity, such as going to the beach, golfing, skiing, or site-seeing. Rewarding tourism depends on the quality of the experience, so preserving the environment and promoting environmental awareness are fundamental to the long-term success of bicycle tourism.

A bike-friendly atmosphere and infrastructure are crucial to developing a bicycle tourism program. The bicycle activity of local residents is a good indicator. If the level of bicycle use is high, that means good cycling for visitors. If local bicycling is on the wane, it is probably time to address the physical and social climate for cycling.

Hospitality:

All of us have heard the phrase, "Service with a smile." Generous servings of friendliness and helpfulness go a long way toward bringing tourists back.

The training of staff at establishments that will benefit from bicycle tourism will be very important. We must find ways to ensure that employees of local hotels and related services are knowledgeable about area cycling facilities and know to refer tourists to the correct website for specific routes and information.

Lodging sites that want to cater to cyclists can add just

Marketing Strategies

a few creative options to attract tourists, or play up existing features that can be seen as bike friendly.

Partnerships and Shared Economic Benefits:

Each community has its own personality, so looking at what each has to offer to bike tourists should be examined case-by-case. There are many opportunities to partner and share in the economic benefit of tourism.

- Attain agreements with adjacent property owners to promote the maintenance and appearance of road-sides, buildings, or other structures along the route.
- Evaluate the suitability of all routes for designation as state and/or federal scenic byways.
- Post banners where routes pass through downtowns or along planned streetscapes and partner districts.
- Some cyclists will be looking for assistance in planning a ride, finding accommodations, or luggage transfer. Local businesses might take the opportunity to assist cyclists with their travel planning.
- Arrangements might be made with a local courier to offer luggage transfer on demand.
- Established locations along routes, such as tourist information centers or public libraries, might serve as points for internet access and restrooms.

Special Biking Events:

Develop bicycling events with broad appeal to attract tourists to the region and leverage the appeal of existing events. Look for opportunities to attract touring events as well as competitive activities. A signature ride developed in conjunction with local cycling clubs would introduce many people to the bicycling opportunities in the Ozarks. Plan "car-free" days on portions of designated county road routes. This will encourage locals who might otherwise be deterred from biking alongside cars to experience cycling. It will introduce them to the rewards of cycling, and invite them to try the biking opportunities in the area.

"Cyclists arrive at their accommodations at the end of the day when they are tired and, as always, concerned about the security of their bikes. Hotels with reception areas on the ground floor get a plus because it's easier to keep an eye on the bikes while going in to inquire about room availability, rates, and conditions. As a rule, hotels with large rooms on the ground floor and where bikes can stay in the room are preferred."

~ DAVID MOZER
INTERNATIONAL BICYCLE FUND



Cultural tourism appeals to individuals who want to explore history, culture, and their own heritage, and it appeals to communities that want to share their history and character.

~ CHAD SMITH, PRINCIPAL CHIEF OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

Marketing Strategies

Tandems of the Ozarks

Tandem cycling is gaining new interest across the country and events, such as one now hosted annually in Springfield, demonstrate the types of events that can be developed to attract new people and tourists to the region. In 2014, for the first time, a small event was hosted by local bicycling enthusiasts and members of the club, Tandems of the Ozarks. The group hosted 24 riders in Springfield and Greene County for a weekend of cycling on "bicycles built for two."

The inaugural ride offered two route options, 15 or 24 miles, followed by a wine and cheese tasting at the Double Tree. A Saturday ride was followed by dinner at Houlihan's. The weekend finished with a Sunday ride on the Frisco Highline Trail and the Greene County road system, finishing at Ritter Springs Park.

Ozark Greenways conducted a brief survey of riders who participated in the 2014 Tandem Weekend.

Participant Snapshot:

- Participants came from as near as 5 miles
- to as far as 700 miles away.
- Average traveling distance was 205 miles (3 hour drive), also the target marketing radius
- recommended for Springfield cycling events.
- Riders participate in an average of 7.8 organized cycling events annually.
- Average spending per rider was \$135 with \$3,245 spent by the group.
- Participants were comprised of 41% professionals, with the remainder split between retired and other.
- Average age was 55.4 years.



Participant Survey Comments:

What was your impression of bicycling in this area and would you return for a future ride?

- Love it.
- Absolutely would do it again. Very pleasing.
- Smooth roads and drivers were patient...we want to return
- Yes, we want to return. Beautiful scenery, few cars

Would you recommend the Springfield area as a cycling destination to other cyclists?

- Of course, certainly
- Yes, we plan to come back for next year's event and bring friends
- Yes x 9

What could the community do to make your cycling experience and visit better?

- You have done great
- Keep adding bike lanes, trails, and routes

It's a Tradition Now

The Southwest Missouri Tandem Rally is now an annual event with almost 40 riders most recently. Social media activity has increased in the advent of the 2019 rally, set for May 31 through June 2.

Marketing Strategies

Building Bike Tourism in the Beyond the OTO Region

The intention of this plan is not simply to create a few themed bicycle loops in the area. A comprehensive plan should address the outlying communities and how they might participate in the benefit from promoting their communities as a bicycle-friendly destination. Interesting community attractions, history, and events are all potential tools to be used.

Within the OTO region, three outlying communities - Fair Grove, Walnut Grove, and Ash Grove - are located along Adventure Cycling's Trans-America Trail bicycling route. This is a great initial advantage for some creative local marketing. The following information is provided from Adventure Cycling and offers some very basic tips to get the rural area residents of Christian and Greene Counties thinking about attracting cyclists to their communities.

Ideas and Resources for Building Bicycle Tourism

Traveling cyclists seek out services in nearly every town they visit. By providing some or all of the following services, your town could become a favorite destination for bicycle travelers to visit, dine, and spend the night. Attracting cyclists is an economic boon to communities, especially rural towns.

- A small community investment in the
- development of a bike camp in 2009 put Twin
- Bridges, MT on the map for cyclists traveling
- along the Trans-America Trail.
- Farmington, MO has accomplished the same
- kind of success with Al's Place, a cyclist-only
- hostel created by the city.

Identify Routes Near Your Community

Is your town near a known bike route? Check in with your state and county to see if you're near a state, regional, or county route, such as a rail-trail. Even if you are not currently on a designated bike route, you can encourage cyclists to make short detours from an existing route by making your area bike-friendly.

If you are not on or near a designated bike route, but see opportunities to build bike tourism in your community (for example, if you are near a stunning state park,), work to create safe and interesting routes that bike tourists want to visit and see if it's possible to connect your routes with other regional or state bike routes, or the budding U.S. Bicycle Route System. Your state bicycle/pedestrian coordinator or local bike advocacy organization are good places to start.

Offer More Services for Cyclists

Does your community offer the basic services that traveling cyclists are looking for? Up the ante by providing more. Perhaps someone in town could offer cyclist-only accommodations.

Build Support and Promote Benefits

Looking to make a case to your community about the importance of welcoming traveling cyclists and the potential benefits of building bike tourism> There is a lot of research that supports the impact of bike travel on the economies of rural communities and states.

Post Welcome Signs and Route Decals

Many communities put up signs at the end of town that say, "Bicyclists Welcome" or "Bicycle-Friendly Town." These signs are a great way to convey the fact that your town is welcoming to traveling cyclists.

Marketing Strategies

Businesses can put up signs in their windows saying, "Welcome Bicyclists" as well. The small town of Farmington, Missouri, even spray-painted directions on the road to their town's cyclists-only lodging. This small gesture proved invaluable to travelers on two wheels.

If your community is on one of the Adventure Cycling routes, ask town businesses to order and display AC route window-cling decals to show their support of traveling cyclists and to promote awareness of the local route/trail network.

Promote Your Town's Resources

Inform your local newspaper and radio station of the steps you are taking to build bike tourism, and why you are taking them. A local travel or lifestyle magazine, may be interested in featuring an article about your town's efforts. Regional and state bike organizations and tourism bureaus are also great allies. The more partners you have in this effort, the more you will get the word out, and word of mouth is great advertising.

Provide a visitor's map to cyclists that shows basic resources and services of your community. Smaller communities could distribute a map, or even just a list of services for cyclists, at the town cafe, library, visitor's center, or other business. Does your town have its own website? Post your services for cyclists there, maybe with a nice welcome message.

Community residents could also brainstorm creative activities or attractions for people to participate in when not on the bike. Several communities on national routes have promoted fishing, birding, cave tours, farm tours, or general

sightseeing, some with local themes. The goal is to promote and preserve your region's special character and sense of place, while offering a unique visitor experience.

Engage with the Bike-Travel Community

Cities and counties in the OTO region can connect with Spring Bike, Ozark Greenways, the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation, or other cycling clubs to help promote their cycle attractions to the cycling community.

Social media is a great way to reach out to traveling cyclists. Contact your state's bicycle/pedestrian coordinator as they may be able to point you toward bike-travel resources in your region. Finally, take with traveling cyclists. Passing cyclists often talk to each other, and this word-of-mouth advertising is invaluable.

Contact the Experts

In addition to the Adventure Cycling Association, there may be other valuable resources in Missouri, including the Missouri Department of Transportation's (MoDOT's) Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, local bicycle nonprofits, or the Alliance for Biking and Walking.



Marketing Strategies

Become a Bike-Travel-Friendly Town

Food

Traveling bicyclists are always looking for grocery stores and restaurants. Even if your community does not have a full-blown eatery or grocery store, other businesses, such as gas stations, convenience stores, or even campgrounds, may want to stock some basic cycling foods - energy bars, oatmeal, and trail mix. Do not forget to put up a sign that says, "Snacks Available."

Water

Bicyclists like to fill up their water bottles when they get to towns, so even if your town does not have a public water fountain, sometimes just a spigot outside a shop does the trick. During summer, ice is always appreciated.

Accommodations

Many small communities along national bike routes, and even local regional trail systems, allow bicyclists to state at local churches, parks, community centers, and fairgrounds. Some even have separate tent pads with picnic tables available. Communities should set aside space away from lawn sprinklers. If possible, keep the restrooms open at night, especially at the height of bicycling season.

Bike Storage

Cyclists need a safe place to park their bikes while shopping or staying in a hotel. There are many options to choose from when providing racks for bike parking. When placing your racks, remember to allow breathing room between the racks and the

building. A rack too close to a building or wall can reduce its capacity by half or even make it unusable. For hotel stays, most cyclists will want to bring their bicycle inside. A hotel/motel where bikes aren't welcome in rooms will not be a first choice for a cyclist.

Communications

Making a phone available for use by cyclists at the local diner, coffee shop, or laundromat is great. These days, a simple electric outlet for phone charging is a great service to offer. Allowing cyclists temporary access at the local library is also great. Phone/internet access allows cyclists to keep in touch with loved ones, pay bills back at home, and stay connected with the larger world.

Hygiene

Showers are always a big hit with cyclists, and your local pool, community center, YMCA, or church may have some facilities that could be shared with them. Bicyclists usually travel very light, so doing laundry becomes an important task. If your community does not have a laundromat, washers and dryers might be made available through your local YMCA, church, community center, or store.

Bike Tools

Cyclists are often in need of some basic bike tools and supplies. These include items such as tubes, spokes, oil, patch kits, etc. If your town doesn't have a local bike shop, some communities stock a basic array of bicycle supplies in their hardware store. Make sure to let folks know about these products with a small sign in the window saying, "Basic Bike Tools Available." Having bike pumps available at local gas stations or hardware stores for bicyclists to borrow is also a welcome service.

Way-Finding Signage

No one likes getting lost. The easier that bicycling tourists can find their way along their routes and to related destinations, the more enjoyable their trip will be. It's good for them and for the program. The comfort level of most people requires visual guidance as well as a map.

Suggestions

Develop consistent signage with a repeating logo and branding for designated bicycling routes. This should include directional signs from major roads to trailheads and parking areas. Directional signage for routes could be painted on the road surface rather than using signs. It's a durable technique, less expensive, easier to maintain, and not subject to theft.

Coordinating the design of the printable route map with the way-finding signage is very important to keeping a consistent identity to the program, making it easy to identify. Developing a simple, relevant, easily identifiable logo helps marketing, as well as way-finding. In the attachments to this chapter, we include examples of bike-route signage from other communities around the country.

Springfield's existing on-street bike routes and greenways already have signage, so these suggestions apply to the need to create signage for bike routes on county roads.

The World of Signs

The Placement of signs along our public roadways is a challenge for this type of project. The assumption that you can simply place a post and attach a desired sign bearing your message at a desired location is more fantasy than reality.

Where to Place Way-Finding Signage

- Parking areas and trailheads
- Road bike routes, as identified in the next chapter
- Connections to urban on-street bike routes and off-street trails such as the Frisco Highline Trail and other Ozarks Greenways paths
- Related services within 1.5 miles of mapped routes, including public restrooms, convenience stores, bike services and rentals, and accommodations
- Attractions within 1.5 miles of mapped routes, including commercial, cultural, historic, and scenic sites
- Connections to public transportation and airports
- Connections throughout the region and beyond



"I feel that I am entitled to my share of lightheartedness and there is nothing wrong with enjoying one's self simply, like a boy."

~LEO TOLSTOY, IN RESPONSE TO BEING CRITICIZED FOR LEARNING TO RIDE A BICYCLE AT AGE 67

Way-Finding Signage

A considerable amount of time has been spent on the subject of way-finding, or directional, signage for this project. As the design, placement, maintenance, and possible replacement of signage are costly in terms of both material and labor, we are challenged to find the most efficient, and sustainable, method to fulfill the objective of providing directional guidance for future users.

Why Directional Signs are Needed

Bike tourists, like auto drivers, travel more safely when directional and warning signs are placed along roadways. Signs offer not only direction, but also a reinforced feeling that one is headed in the right direction to reach their destination, and thus help contribute to a more relaxed operator, whether traveling by bicycle, motorcycle, or car. For visitors from outside the area, directional signage offers an added assurance that they are traveling in the correct direction, and that, in turn, adds to both the enjoyment and safety of their experience.

The Sign Challenge

The original approach for the directional signs recommended in this plan was thought to be very simple. After discussions with area agency highway officials, it was learned that this project was not as simple as anticipated.

The initial concept called for placing small, 8-inch, square route logo signs on existing signposts in county rights-of-way. While this approach would not work for every location, it was thought that 90 percent of the signage needs might be covered in this fashion. The benefits were that directional signs could be placed on existing posts,

thus avoiding the cost of buying and installing new posts. That plan would also keep sign "clutter" to a minimum - a service for mowing and other required maintenance tasks.

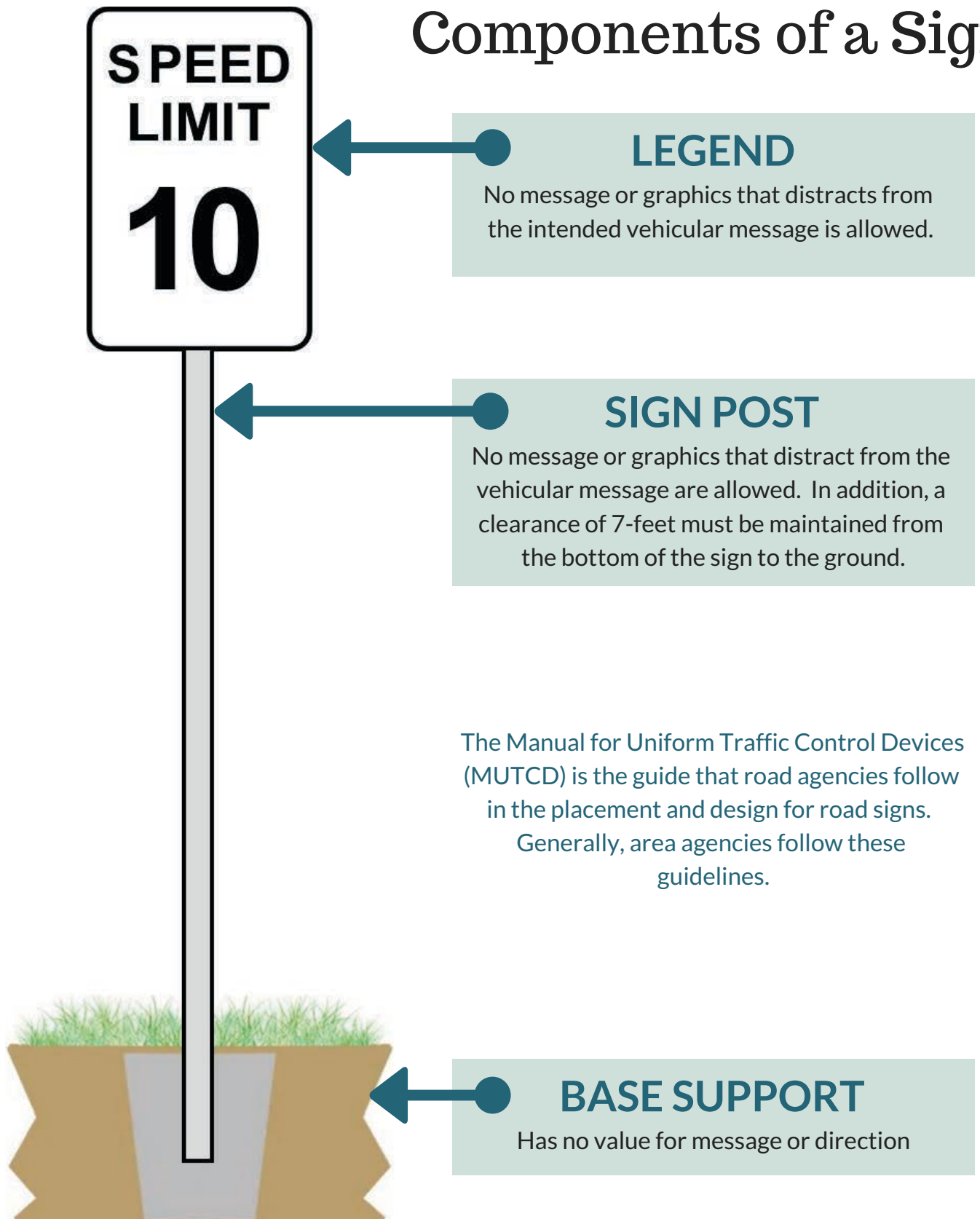
This plan had the additional benefit of reducing cost. For example, if one were to consider the directional signage of the proposed annual Queen City Century Bicycle Ride, which would require at the minimum 100 signs (placed only in one direction), the cost could easily be as much as \$15,000. Using an average of one sign per mile, this is a conservative estimate of the number of signs needed. If, however, 90 percent of the signs could be placed on existing sign posts, the cost would be reduced considerably.

The graphic on the next page, "Components of a Sign," illustrates the reasons to avoid placing additional signs on existing sign posts. Many examples of stacked signs can be found along the county roads, however, considering the county is interested in the gradual removal and cleaning up of its sign posts, we do not wish to add to the challenge.



Way-Finding Signage

Components of a Sign



Way-Finding Signage

Proposed Solution

Our recommendation is to sign the routes in the method shown in the photos on this page, with the name of the particular route/loop listed. Place the route/loop name identifier sign above sign posts currently in the field, as shown to the right. These suggestions take some advantage of current sign structures in the rights-of-way without additional signs being installed at intersections. While this goes a long way in providing a solution for directions at intersections, there is still a need for some "reinforcement" signing between intersections where one might travel a mile or more without changing direction.

Additional Benefits

One objective of this project is to discover a method by which both the Queen City Century bike ride and the annual Tour de Bass ride routes might be permanently marked in Greene County. This 100-mile loop is used twice a year for these events. In between events, many local cyclists use sections of the loops for routine fitness/training rides. The route is marked twice a year by event volunteers, who spray-paint the route turns and rest stops on the road surface. This involves a considerable amount of time and effort. This practice has at times added confusion to the marking of utilities crossing the roadways. If a system of permanently signed directions/turns could be established, it would go far to begin establishing themed routes in the counties and would add greatly to both the local and visitor biking experience in the OTO region.



The Routes

The Ozarks region possesses a variety of biking options suitable to a wide range of skill levels and interests, including a 70-mile greenway trail network, urban on-street bike routes, and a network of paved county roads that are excellent for road biking.

In this section, we will explore several routes in both Christian and Greene Counties that would be excellent to promote as tourist destinations.

The routes presented here were selected after much study and review of area natural and physical resources, as well as interest levels and road routing conditions. Also in play was the value of current and potential points of interest from local cyclists and consideration for what might be the most interesting features for visitors.

Many route opportunities exist, all based on an individual's level of interest and cycling ability. We do not claim to have identified the only themed route possibilities, but instead have selected the examples that are believed to best capture the intent of this study.

- Frisco Highline Trail, Boone Route
- Loop the Lakes
- Bikes and Battlefields
- Ozark/Nixa/Springfield

Future Route Considerations

- Trail of Tears Corridor
- Route 66 Corridor
- Bois D'Arc Loop
- Turners Station Loop



"It is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up the hills and coast down them. Thus you remember them as they actually are, while in a motor car only a high hill impresses you, and you have no such accurate remembrance of country you have driven through as you gain by riding a bicycle."

~ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The Routes-FHT Boone Loop

Frisco Highline Trail Boone Loop

The Frisco Highline Trail (FHT) was acquired in 1994 by Ozark Greenways (OG), and is currently the second longest rail-trail in Missouri. Its length of 35 miles connects Springfield to Bolivar.

Following salvage operations and removal of rails and ties, development of this route as a bike trail began in 1995 with funding from OG, a variety of state and local grants, and the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

While OG has worked to improve and maintain this trail over the past 18 years, it is still a diamond in the rough as a tourism attraction. The potential for this trail to attract visitors from a 200-mile radius has not yet been fully realized. A well-funded marketing plan and resources to implement such a plan would greatly benefit the communities along the trail by attracting visitors and related revenues.

Working with what is already on the ground, the FHT is a great attraction. It functions well by offering a great cycling experience within the existing 35-mile corridor. The trail is currently referred to as “Southwest Missouri’s Premier Rail-Trail,” suggesting a unique trail experience.

However, there is an outstanding opportunity to expand the trail’s role in local tourism. By using the trail as a spine and developing attractive loops off of it that utilize the county road system, towns and places of historic or cultural interest could be connected, greatly expanding the role of this trail as a major tourism hub.

The successful role of a rail-trail in regional tourism

is strong in areas where the local communities have invested in trail infrastructure, marketing and unique attractions that set their communities apart from others. For a comparison, we visited the following rail-trails, as well as the communities along them:

- Katy Trail State Park, Missouri
- Prairie Spirit Trail, Kansas
- Root River & Paul Bunyan Trails, Minnesota
- Raccoon Valley Trail, Iowa
- Cowboy Trail, Nebraska South Dakota
- George Mickelson Trail, South Dakota

Boone Loop Route - 32.18 miles

This route offers two choices for the starting point. One is the Springfield Trailhead located at Kearney and Eldon streets. This start point adds 12 miles to the route and backtracks the last 6 miles. Or, another starting point is at the Willard Trailhead, located at Highway O and Jackson streets in Willard. For the description below, we start at the Willard Trailhead which makes a great out and back loop route and is friendly to the beginning cyclist.

- Starting at the Willard Trailhead, mile marker 6, travel northwest following the Frisco Highline Trail (FHT). The first two miles of this route are an asphalt surface. The surface changes to gravel at mile marker 8.
- Follow the FHT to mile 13.5 and watch for Farm Road 36. This is the location of a historic railroad community called Harold, which once included a small depot and not much more.
- From the trail, cross highway 123 onto Farm Road 36. Follow FR36 1.6 miles to FR45 and go left.

The Routes-FHT Boone Loop

- The remnants of the old mining community of Phenix will start to appear on your left in the form of two old lime kilns. The quarry is still in operation today. Across from the quarry entrance, one will find an old building which was once a main attraction to this mining village.
- Phenix was a company town that existed for the sole purpose of mining marble and limestone from the adjacent quarry. It was unique in that the town had a library, an orchestra, movies, and a theaters, and a church with a full-time minister. Bonnie Parker of Bonnie and Clyde fame also attended elementary school here for a time! Today, the quarry is still mined for crushed stone and a few of the old buildings still remain, but the town has ceased to exist.
- Of particular interest at this site are the original lime kilns and the remains of a once-thriving town of approximately 500 that disappeared during the Great Depression. Marble from Phenix Quarry was used to build the New York Stock Exchange, San Francisco's Russ Building, the Petroleum Securities building in Los Angeles, Kansas City's Southwestern Bell Telephone Building, the Missouri State Capitol building in Jefferson City, and other well-known buildings across the United States.
- Continue on Farm Road 45 to the junction of FR 34. Turn left on FR 34.
- Follow FR34 for 1.5 miles to FR33. Turn left on FR33 for 2 miles to State Highway "V."
- Follow Highway "V" for 1 mile to the entrance of Nathan Boone Historic Site. Service includes restrooms, water, picnic tables and a small park office. This site was established in 1991 to preserve Nathan Boone's home; he was the youngest child of the legendary pioneer Daniel Boone. The Missouri Division of State Parks offers tours of the home and the cemetery.
- From this point, one may return to Willard along the same route for a round-trip distance of 14.16 miles, or continue the loop through Ash Grove*, adding 17.57 miles.
- Continuing to Ash Grove: From the Boone historic site entrance on Highway "V", turn left and follow "V" for 1.8 miles to Ash Grove. Here one will find convenience stores, restaurants and limited antique shopping. At the intersection of Highway "V" and 160, continue on "V" for four blocks to historic Main Street. Explore as you see fit.
- At Main Street, turn left/east, then veer right at the "Y" onto Daniel Ave. for two blocks to Prairie Lane. Follow Prairie Lane for .66 mile to Piper Road (also called FR33).
- Turn left on Piper Road crossing State Highway 160 for 1.2 miles to FR64. Turn right on FR64 and follow for 1.02 miles to FR43.
- Turn left on FR43 for 2.03 miles to FR48.
- Turn right on FR58 for 1.54 miles to FR53.
- Turn left on FR53 for 1.14 miles to FR36

The Routes-FHT Boone Loop

- Turn right on FR 36 cross Hwy 123 and rejoin the Frisco Highline Trail.
- Turn right on to the FHT and follow it 7.2 miles back to the Willard Trailhead.

Natural Features

Great farm scenery
Creeks

Historic Features

Frisco Highline Trail
Remnants of the Village of Phenix
Nathan Boone Homestead
Father Moses Museum (open by appointment)

Recommended Travel Direction

Counter-clockwise

Why This Route Is Attractive

What attracts bicyclists to rail trails? A good trail surface is the number one attraction that will entice visitors and encourage return visits. Whether it's a hard gravel surface or a hard asphalt surface makes little difference. A well maintained surface free of ruts, holes, cracks and other debris is the number one investment a community can make in attracting visitors to their trail and community.

Secondary, yet still very important, are trailheads with secure parking, restrooms, and access to drinking water. The best trailheads are those that work in conjunction with existing parks that provide these amenities. The best trailheads on long distance trails provide for low-impact camping, including fire rings, picnic tables, and shower facilities.

The third element is physical attractiveness: the geography, landscape and scenery of the trail. The Katy Trail along the Missouri River is known for its limestone bluffs, while Nebraska's Cowboy Trail is known for its wide open prairie landscape.

The George S. Mickelson Trail in South Dakota cuts a curving course through mountains and Ponderosa pine forests, over creeks and through narrow valleys. Every few miles the trail traverses a converted railroad bridge. There are 97 bridges along the way. Indeed, if there's a signature feature to this rail-trail it is the bridges, many of which are set on trestles hundreds of feet high. The FHT offers 16 trestle bridges along its corridor, ranging in length from 15 feet to 300 feet long. These trestles offer a great opportunity as an attraction and should be included in a marketing plan.



The Routes-FHT Boone Loop

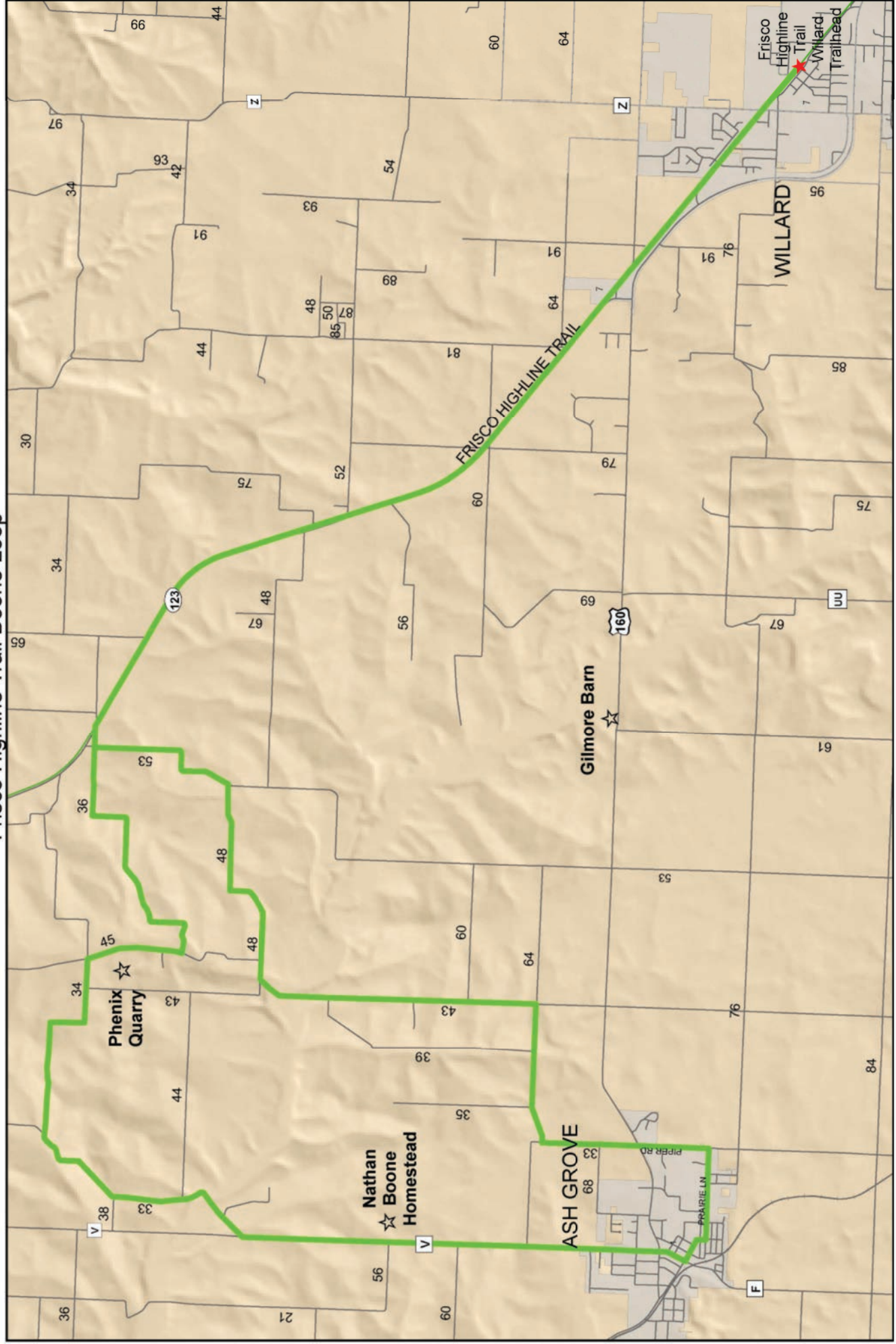
Recommendations for Marketing the FHT

- Develop a strong marketing plan that involves the trail communities of Springfield, Willard, Walnut Grove and Bolivar.
- Establish partners and funding sources to implement a marketing plan. Utilize the Missouri Division of Tourism and its website.
- Encourage communities to develop and promote special events that involve the trail or will draw trail users to their community via the trail.
- Encourage communities to invest in education about the trail, its benefits and amenities.
- Promote community pride/ownership of the trail.
- Provide directional signage to direct visitors to the trail and access points.
- Highlight special trail features such as the trestles and develop a signature event that includes and involves the trail communities, such as "The Bridges of Polk County," or the "FHT Gravel Grinder."
- In 2014, the Frisco Highline Trail was 20 years old. Communities and trail users capitalized on this anniversary to attract attention to this milestone, tell the story of the trail, and recommit new energy for the trail with a focus on the trail being a tool in the regions tourism tool box. Future anniversaries should be used to this same effect.
- Partnerships should be cultivated with motels at each end of the trail to combine motel stays and promote trail use thru incentives, discounts or events on the trail. Both Bolivar and Springfield have excellent motel lodging with in proximity of their trailheads.
- Kansas City, Columbia, Joplin should be first level areas in which weekend "Itinerary Trips" for the Frisco Highline Trail should be targeted. They are within a easy drive to the trail and the FHT offers a new and different trail weekend experience for these potential visitors.
- Local officials and agencies should encourage, support and promote the use of the trail for special events which involve cycling, walking, and running or fitness activities. The trail can accommodate highly organized or smaller informal vents. Such events can be of benefit to the local economy as well as offering activities for local residents.

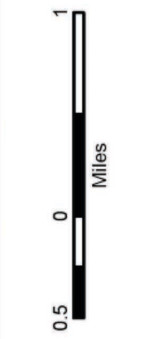
Encouraging local participation with activities and events builds a sense of ownership, and can promote facilities beyond the region.



Frisco Highline Trail Boone Loop



- ☆ Historic Sites
- ★ Trailhead
- FHT Boone Loop





Visit the Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site by Bike

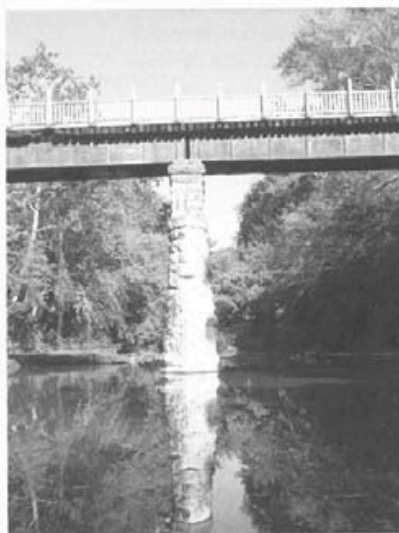
By Terry Whaley, Ozark Greenways, Inc.

With the exception of the KATY Trail State Park, most of Missouri's Parks and Historic sites require a vehicle to get in and around. In southwest Missouri, there is a secret little mix of privately owned (open to the public) rail trail and a state historic site, when combined; make a great day trip for area cyclists.

With the addition of five miles of the Frisco Highline Trail last fall, between Willard and Springfield, residents and visitors can start a trip in Springfield and visit Nathan Boone Homestead Historic Site, near Ash Grove, by bike via the Frisco Highline Rail Trail. The 48-mile round trip from the Springfield trailhead offers a great taste of rural Missouri landscapes and farms. For a shorter trip of 38 miles, start your ride in Willard, at the Jackson Street Trailhead. The route combines use of the trail and hard surface county farm roads.

The Frisco Highline Trail is the second longest rail trail project in Missouri, and has been developed by Ozark Greenways, Inc., a local trail advocate group. The Springfield-Greene County Park Board works in partnership with Ozark Greenways to manage the trail corridor in Greene County.

A visit to the Nathan Boone Homestead is a rewarding and educational experience about the life of the Boone frontier family that resided at this site. Efforts to restore the cabin to its original 1856 condition have been a challenge for park staff, but fantastic progress has been made in the past four years. This historic site offers a relaxing and tranquil contrast to today's world and gives a flavor of what living on the edge of a prairie frontier might have been like. The interpretation staff at the site knows the Boone story inside and out. They



Above is the Sac River Bridge on the Frisco Highline Trail. Below is the Nathan Boone



have a great gift for making history a relevant and exciting experience for visitors. In addition to the restored one and a half story log home, an old cemetery offers an opportunity for many stories for the park staff.

Along the route, you will pass through the old Phenix Quarry site. This 1902 community was once thriving with a school, church, general store and many homes, but little remains. The Phenix quarry, famous for its marble, used in the construction of the Greene County Courthouse and many other buildings throughout the state, is now privately owned. Views from the road offer a glimpse of some old buildings and large kilns used as part of a limestone operation.

Directions to Nathan Boone Historic site from the Willard Trailhead: follow the trail north seven miles to Greene County Farm Road 34, which enters across Highway 123 on the right; follow FR 34 to the intersection of Farm Road 45. Phenix Quarry is on your left; ride through the intersection to Farm Road 43 at the top of the hill; turn left and proceed to Farm Road 44; make a right on FR 44 to State Highway V (this is a very pretty section of the ride). Go south (left) on V and you will find the entrance to the historic site at the top of the hill, to the left. The entry road into the site was (at one time) gravel and a bit tricky on a road bike. Proceed with caution as you approach the visitor center at the bottom of the hill. •

For hours of operation and special event information on Boone Historic Site call 573-751-2768.

The Routes-Loop the Lakes

Loop the Lakes Route

One of the finest natural resources in Greene County is the Fellows Lake and McDaniel Lake area. While primarily functioning as drinking water reservoirs, these lakes offer recreation opportunities for fishing, sailing and canoeing. The area around the lakes represents a very scenic example of the Greene County countryside within minutes of the entire Springfield population. This is an excellent route to challenge local residents for fitness, though offers limited support facilities along the loops. This route can be accessed from trailheads located at Valley Water Mill, Lost Hill Farm Park, David C. Murray Park, and Truman Elementary School.

The roads in this area have low traffic volume and are maintained in excellent condition by the Greene County Highway Department. They offer some of the best mid-level road bicycling in the county. The routes in this document were explored to establish which of them might offer the best potential for bicycle tourism in this area.

Short Loop - 7.8 miles

- Left on FR175, following it to State Highway AA
- A short left on AA to FR177
- Right on FR177 to FR88
- Right on FR88 to FR175
- FR175 to FR94
- Right on FR94 to FR177, returning to Valley Water Mill

Moderate Loop - 15.87 miles

- Starting at the Valley Water Mill Education Center (VWM), at 1234 Valley Water Mill Road, this route will loop to Fellows Lake and back to the VWM site; another option is to loop to McDaniel Lake as well. VWM offers parking, restrooms and drinking water, as well as fishing and nature trail hiking.
- Exit VWM parking lot and turn left on VWM Road traveling below and across the damn spillway.
- Turn right on FR 171 for 0.51 miles to FR94
- Right on FR94 for 0.78 miles to FR175
- Left on FR175 for 0.5 miles to FR88
- Right on FR88 to FR189
- Left on FR189 for 0.91 miles to State Highway AA
- Right on Hwy AA for 1.36 miles, where it will merge into FR197
- Remain on FR197, cross the lake to the junction of FR68, veer left at Y, but stay on FR197
- Continue on FR197, which will transition into FR66.
- Pass the public access entrance for Fellows Lake. (Restrooms, shade, picnic tables, water and small seasonal bait shop/concessions are available, as is an optional route along the lake shore hills which rejoins FR66.)
- Continue on FR66 to FR175

The Routes-Loop the Lakes

Long Loop to McDaniel Lake - 25.4 miles

- Continue on FR66 TO FR171
- Left on FR171 to State Highway AA
- Right on AA crossing Highway H. AA changes to FR80, continue west on FR80 to FR159
- Right on FR159 to FR76
- Left on FR76 crossing McDaniel Lake - Lake bridge open to bicycle and pedestrian use only.
- Follow FR76 to FR141 (Old Hwy 13) and turn left for 1.28 miles to FR86
- Left FR 86 to FR 145 follow to FR 84
- Right on FR 84 to FR 151
- Right on FR 151 Pass Lost Hill Natural Resource Park—Restrooms water and Trailhead Parking. Also, access to the South Dry Sac Trail and connection to Truman School and Trailhead. (FR159 & FR100)
- Continue on FR151, uphill and no shoulder to FR96
- Left on FR96 to FR159
- Right on FR159 to FR100
- FR100 to FR165 Right on FR165 to Valley Water Mill Road

- Left on VWM Road crossing State HWY “H,” then continue east to FR171

- Left on FR171, returning to VWM

Natural Features

Valley Water Mill

Fellows Lake

McDaniel Lake

Lost Hill Natural Resources Park

Historic Features

Glidewell School

David C. Murray Homestead

Butterfield Stage Coach River Crossing

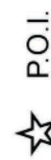
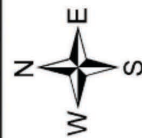
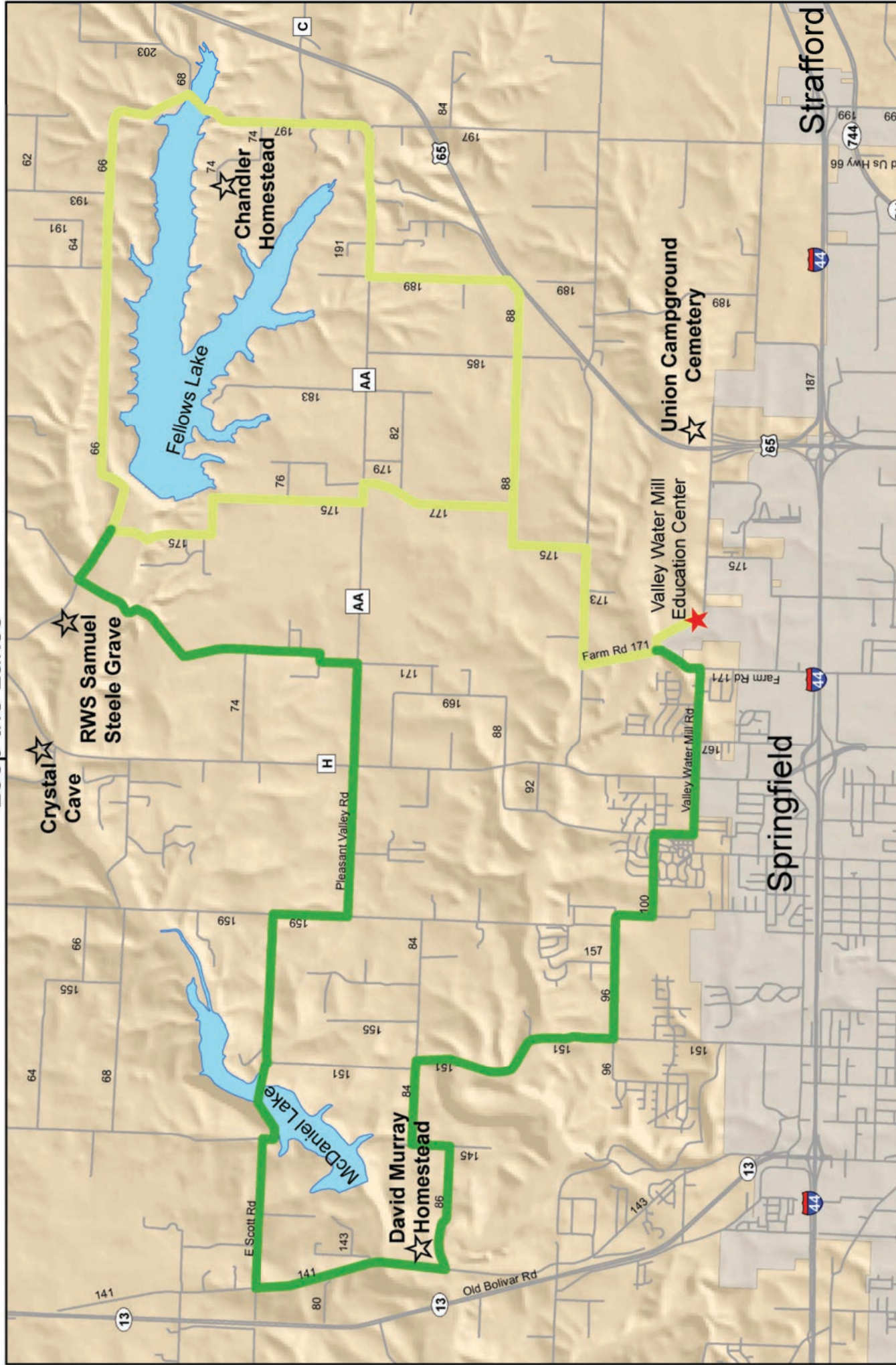
Spring Lawn Farm

Recommended Direction of Travel

Counter-Clockwise



Loop the Lakes



P.O.I.



Starting Point



Long Loop



Moderate Loop



Miles

The Routes-Bikes & Battlefields

Bikes and Battlefields Loop

This route starts in the center of Springfield and guides one from a heavily urbanized area along the South Creek Greenway to some of the best landscape in the county. The unique trait of this route is the use of an established urban greenway to connect to county roads, which encourages cyclists to explore both the urban and country landscapes. Within the urban area, the greenway passes through commercial and residential areas, connecting to parks, neighborhoods and schools. The designers did a great job weaving this greenway through the built environment and along the floodway. The community has also worked to provide safe underpasses and overpasses at busy intersections in order for cyclists to avoid street level crossings at these points.

Although the route below starts at Lee McDaniel Park, cyclists may also start further down the trail at Nathanael Greene Park Trailhead, or at the Volunteer Nature Trail Trailhead at FR168 (also known as Rountree Road).



Bikes and Battlefields Loop - 29.14 miles

(without the 5-mile loop at the National Battlefield)

- This route begins in the Springfield at Lee McDaniel Park Trailhead, at National and Sunset Avenues. This is the trailhead parking area for the South Creek Greenway, and riders get to enjoy the greenway trail for the first five miles of this route.
- From the trailhead, proceed west on South Creek Greenway. After crossing the Kansas Expressway overpass, there is an information kiosk on the right that presents information about the Trail of Tears.
- Continue west through Nathanael Greene/Close Park and past the Botanical Center. Restrooms and drinking fountains are available in the visitor center.
- Proceed west to Battlefield Road at mile marker 5. The trail continues past this point for another 1,200 feet before it dead-ends.
- Follow the pedestrian access ramp up to Battlefield Road and then proceed west in the striped bike lane to the intersection of Battlefield Road and Highway.160, known also as West Bypass.
- Restrooms and drinks are available at the convenience store there.
- Cross Highway 160 and veer left, continue on the old outer road, called Kauffman Road. Just past a small church on the right, the South Creek Greenway continues into the woods.
- Remain on the trail for the next 1.02 miles until the exit at FR168.

The Routes-Bikes & Battlefields

- Exit the trail, turn left and follow FR168 for 0.57 miles to Highway 160.
- At Highway 160, turn right. The wide shoulders and MoDOT's signed "Share the Road" bike route to Republic Road make this a safe and easy connection into the City of Battlefield. This may not be for all cyclists, as car traffic can travel fast through this stretch, but the wide shoulder offers a comfort margin for most cyclists. Remain in single file and follow all traffic rules when approaching and passing through intersections.
- Pass through the intersection of FF and Highway M. Remain on FF into the City of Battlefield for 1.39 miles to Mary Street on the right. Turn right and proceed one block on Mary Street.
- Turn left onto Old Wire Road.
- The Old Wire Road is a historic road in Missouri and Arkansas. Several local roads are still known by this name. It followed an old Native American route, the Great Osage Trail, across the Ozarks and then became a road along the telegraph line from St. Louis to Fort Smith, Arkansas. This route was also used by the Butterfield Overland Mail. It was known as the "Wire Road" while the telegraph line was in use, but when the line was later removed, it became known as the "Old Wire Road."
- In St. Louis, where the road begins at Jefferson Barracks, it is called Telegraph Road. From St. Louis to Springfield, it became designated Route 14, which later became U.S. Route 66, and still later Interstate 44). At Springfield, it turned southwest and passed through what is now Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. From the Battlefield, it meandered southwest through Christian and Stone counties in Missouri towards the Arkansas state line. Once in the Natural State, it passed near Pea Ridge and then Fayetteville, on its way to Fort Smith, Arkansas.
- The Old Wire Road was used as part of the Trail of Tears and then during the Civil War when Confederate soldiers often cut the telegraph line.
- Follow the Old Wire Road thru a residential area for 0.96 mile to Elm Street. Services can be found just two blocks off this route within the City of Battlefield.
- Turn right on Elm Street, which becomes FR182. Follow for 2.18 miles to the entrance of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, a facility of the National Park Service.
- The Battlefield offers a great visitor center with education and interpretation of the Battle of Wilson's Creek in 1861. Cyclists can use the park restrooms and vending machines.
- The 5-mile tour road loop is open to bicyclists and contains additional interpretation of this important Civil War battle. The asphalt road is good condition and is generally friendly to cyclists. Riding a bike through the Battlefield is a great way to explore and learn about this battle.

The Routes-Bikes & Battlefields

- Wilson's Creek was the first major Civil War battle fought west of the Mississippi River, and the scene of the death of Nathaniel Lyon, the first Union general killed in combat. The bloody Southern victory on August 10, 1861, focused greater national attention on the War in Missouri. The nearly pristine landscape allows visitors to experience one of the best-preserved Battlefields in the nation.
- From this point one may retrace the route and return to the starting point for a total distance of 22.46 miles, tour the in-park battlefield loop, adding additional 5 miles, or continue the full road loop listed below.

Continuing Option

- Exit the Battlefield and turn left on FR182 to the intersection of Highway Z.
- Turn left on Highway Z for 2.64 miles entering Christian County and on to Wilson Road.
- Turn left on Wilson Road and follow for 1.59 miles to Heseltine Road. Wilson Road is a bit rough and a short section is gravel, however, most road bikes will handle the surface well.
- Cross Wilson's Creek at a low-water bridge that is a wet crossing of 4-6 inches deep for most of the year.
- At the intersection of Heseltine Road and Wilson Road turn left (north) on Heseltine Road and 2.52 miles returning to FR182.
- Turn right on FR182 and return to the Old Wire Road and retrace the route back to the start.

Natural Features

South Creek
Wilson Creek
Urban Open Space
Drummond Lake
Rural Farm Landscape

Historic Features

Cherokee Trail of Tears Route Crossing
Gray Campbell Homestead
Wilson's Creek National Civil War Battlefield

Recommended Direction of Travel

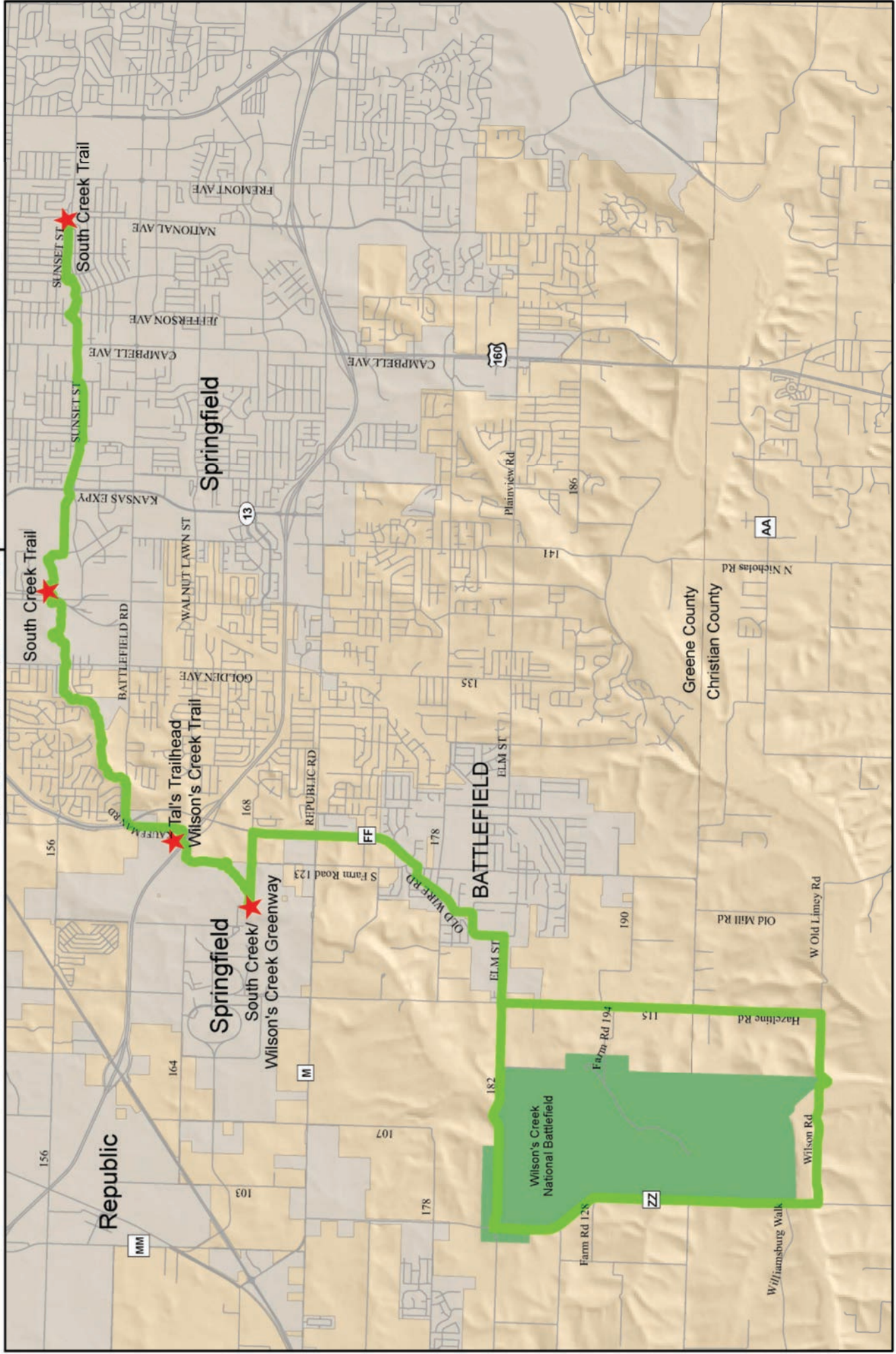
This is an out and back route with the inclusion of two loop options. The loop within the Battlefield in a one way direction and should be traveled in the direction of traffic flow which is clock wise. The optional road loop is best traveled in a counter-clockwise direction. This route offers several challenging hills. but it is very family friendly for the first 5-miles which offers a 10-mile round trip for families.

Why this Route is Attractive

Since this route starts in town, it will be attractive to locals since it is very accessible and family-friendly. To the visitor, it will be attractive due to the amount of services offered and its proximity to restaurants and hotels.

The route also offers a mix of terrain from the flat and level floodplains to some very challenging hills in the county as well as the 5-mile Bloody Hill within the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. This route also offers residents and visitors some great learning opportunities about area history and the important role the Ozarks played in the Civil War and the Trail of Tears.

Bikes & Battelfield Loop



- ★ Trail Heads
- Bike Route



The Routes-Finley Loop

Finley Loop Route

Cycling through Christian County offers a rustic experience within close proximity to the urban area. The Finley Loop is a new route with the development of the Ozarks Regional Destination Plan. This route offers the opportunity to see both downtown Ozark and downtown Nixa, as well as venture near some of the County's more popular natural and cultural sites.

Finley Loop - 36.05 miles

- Starting at downtown Ozark at Ozark Square, turn left on Church St., then turn north (right) onto 3rd street for approximately .5 miles. Merge right at the Jackson St. intersection. On the left will be historic Ozark Mill & McCracken Bridge
- Continue straight onto N Riverside Rd. for 1 mile
- Turn right onto E Greenbridge Rd. for 1.5 miles
- Turn left onto Smyrna Rd. for 1.75 miles
- Turn left onto Parchcorn Rd., then quickly turn left onto Cottonwood Rd. for approximately 2.8 miles
- Turn left onto S Farm Rd. 194 and continue for approximately 4 miles
- Turn left onto Farmer Branch Rd. for 2 miles
- Turn right onto Route J continuing through the Hwy 65 overpass onto Route CC
- Turn left onto N 22nd St. for 1 mile and merge right onto N 21st St. for .5 miles
- Turn right onto Longview Rd. for .9 miles, merging straight onto North Rd. for 2.6 miles
- Turn right onto N Main St. for .25 miles
- Turn left onto Northview Rd. for approximately 1.25 miles, crossing through the Hwy 160 intersection
- Turn left onto N Gregg Rd. for approximately 5.3 miles
- Turn left onto W Riverdale Dr. for 2.7 miles, continuing through the Hwy 160 intersection, and staying right on Riverdale Dr.
- After crossing Riverdale Dam, continue down Riverdale Rd. for approximately 2.4 miles
- Turn right onto Tennessee Rd. for approximately .8 miles
- Turn left onto Collins Rd. (which turns into Wyoming Dr.) for 1.3 miles, turn left onto the Hwy 65 overpass, then make another left onto Selmore Rd. for 2.6 miles. The Covered Bridge will be on the right approximately 1.1 miles down Selmore Rd.
- Continue straight through the South St. intersection and follow S 3rd St. for 1.1 miles, turn right onto Elm St., and arrive back to Ozark Square.

The Routes-Finley Loop

Natural Features

Finley River

Rural Farm Landscape

Historic Features

Downtown Ozark

Ozark Mill

McCracken Bridge

Downton Nixa

Hawkins Bridge

Riverdale Dam

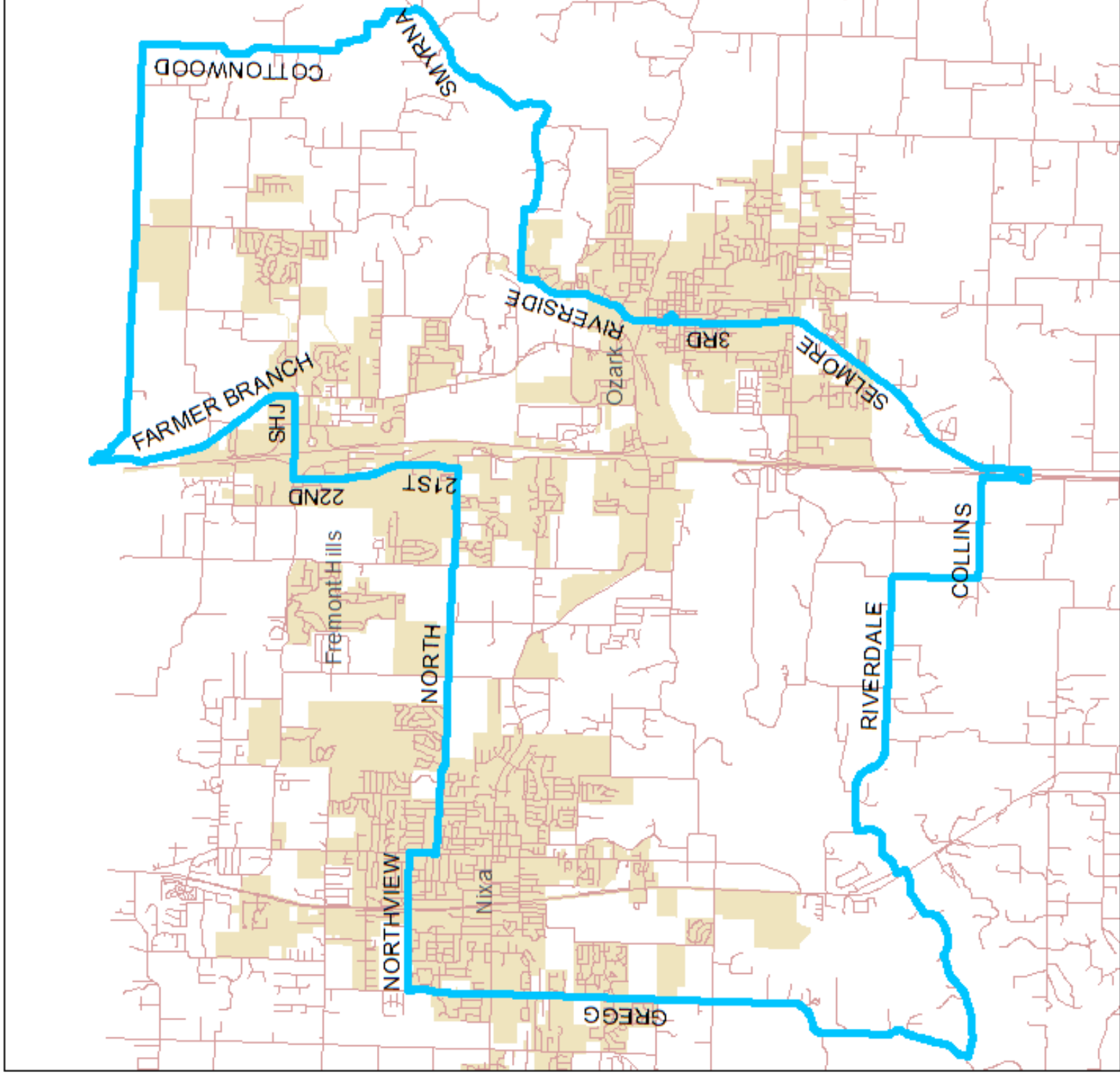
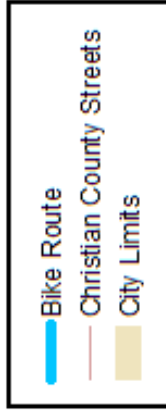
Covered Bridge

Recommended Direction of Travel

Counterclockwise



Ozark, Nixa, Springfield Loop



Special Routes

TransAmerica Trail

The TransAmerica Trail (TA) route was established as part of the U.S. bicentennial in 1976. According to Adventure Cycling* the TA, “is still the greatest and most used route crossing America.”

A recent poll among local trail cyclists found that 98.5% of people in Greene County were unaware of our connection to Yorktown, Virginia or Astoria, Oregon. However, from a cycling and tourism perspective the thin thread that ties Greene County to these towns is the TA. This is a 4,233-mile east-west road route that explores all types of scenery and terrain. The route offers an off-the-interstate, “blue highways” view and the chance to travel and explore America’s rural communities and scenery.

According to Adventure Cycling for the period between January 2010 and January 2013 there were 866 TA map sets purchased from their home office. During that same time period an additional 664 maps were purchased for “section nine”, the section which includes Greene County. Adventure Cycling confirmed local observations of an increase in cyclists taking on the TA route. The current demographic of TA cyclists falls into the categories of college age, retired, and increasing participation from individuals seeking to change their lifestyle, deal with crises, or take on a physical challenge.

Various states on the route have earned reputations from cyclists that reflect the general perception of route users. Word from cyclists on the route is, “Kansas is legendary for its hospitality.” At the other end of the scale, Missouri is famous for its “rude and unfriendly treatment



toward cyclist by vehicle operators” along the route. Road signage of the route was severely lacking in Missouri and is an improvement that would go far in creating a friendlier image and reputation for Missouri.

An attempt to better sign the route within Greene County was initiated in 2009 by Ozark Greenways with participation from the local MoDOT district. Costs and technical aspects related to sign placement, had stalled this initiative. However, in July of 2013 new ROUTE 76 signs were installed across Missouri as part of the new initiative to sign and identify parts of a national bicycle route system by FHWA.

Special Routes

From the east the TA enters Greene County on State Hwy E east of Fair Grove and proceeds west via State Hwy. CC & BB toward Walnut Grove. West of Walnut grove the route follows Hwy. VV thru AshGrove, exiting the county on highway 160 west of Ash Grove. The route is all on state roads, and rarely used by local cyclist. Locals find routes with lower traffic volumes, lower vehicular speeds, better sight lines and safer shoulders more appealing for cycling. Locals also prefer loop routes near their homes as opposed to out-and-back routes.

Most cross-country cyclists traveling the TA average 65-80-miles a day. Depending on a rider's physical skill, travel schedule and desire, 120-mile days are not uncommon, particularly in the Midwest. As Marshfield is a popular overnight stop, many cyclist traverse the Greene County section in one day.

Greene County is fortunate to have the TA passing thru the northern half of the county. While challenging, opportunities to promote community business, activities, events, festivals, and history are not taken advantage of as they might be. While the current number of users is too low to invest in events to attract cyclists, most communities would be best served by the following simple steps.

- Improve residents' awareness that the TA passes through their towns focusing on the business community.
- Offer "cyclist's specials" in local restaurants, motels, camping facilities.

- Promote the use of local parks or other areas for bicycle camping, and employ community centers for showers, etc.
- Improve the awareness of local residents of the existence of the TA so simple inquiries such as directions, local services, distance to next town, best place to eat can be accurately and politely provided.
- Work with MoDOT to provide directional signage across the county.

Greene County would be well served to develop a strategy to set themselves apart from other counties the TA passes thru in Missouri. An opportunity and marketing niche to be the "friendliest county" in Missouri is not an impossible task. A simple program of placing "Welcome TransAmerica Cyclists" at the city limits of each pass thru community would be a simple and inexpensive start.

The City of Farmington Missouri took advantage of being on the TA route by offering their historic jail structure as lodging quarters for cyclists. This move garnered them national attention and recognition in trail and bike touring circles.

A second opportunity to Greene County's location on the TA is the intersection of the route with the Frisco Highline Trail on highway BB east of Walnut Grove. Possibilities may exist to pull the more liberally scheduled cyclists off the TA and onto the Frisco into Willard and Springfield. The task would be to promote and market unique attractions, activities, or services the touring road cyclists would find worthy of their

Special Routes

time. The greatest service may very well be the presence of several well equipped and staffed cycle shops in Springfield for necessary repairs of equipment resupply.

Springfield and the TransAmerica Trail

Research for this report investigated the possibility and process to have a TA alternative route passing thru Springfield. The popular thought is to route the TA along proposed county road bike routes currently identified on the Ozark Transportation Organization bicycle plan. The perceived advantages to this would be to attract cyclists into Springfield for goods, services and attractions. Advantages to the cyclists would be a closer proximity to larger city amenities.

Because TA riders are working to cover 4,000+ miles and usually on a set schedule, the most direct routes are the preferred choice. Out of the way, “off route” or “side trips” are rare unless physical injury or equipment failures are in play. Also the proposed alternate route would avoid the communities of Fair Grove and Walnut Grove routing instead through Strafford and Willard.

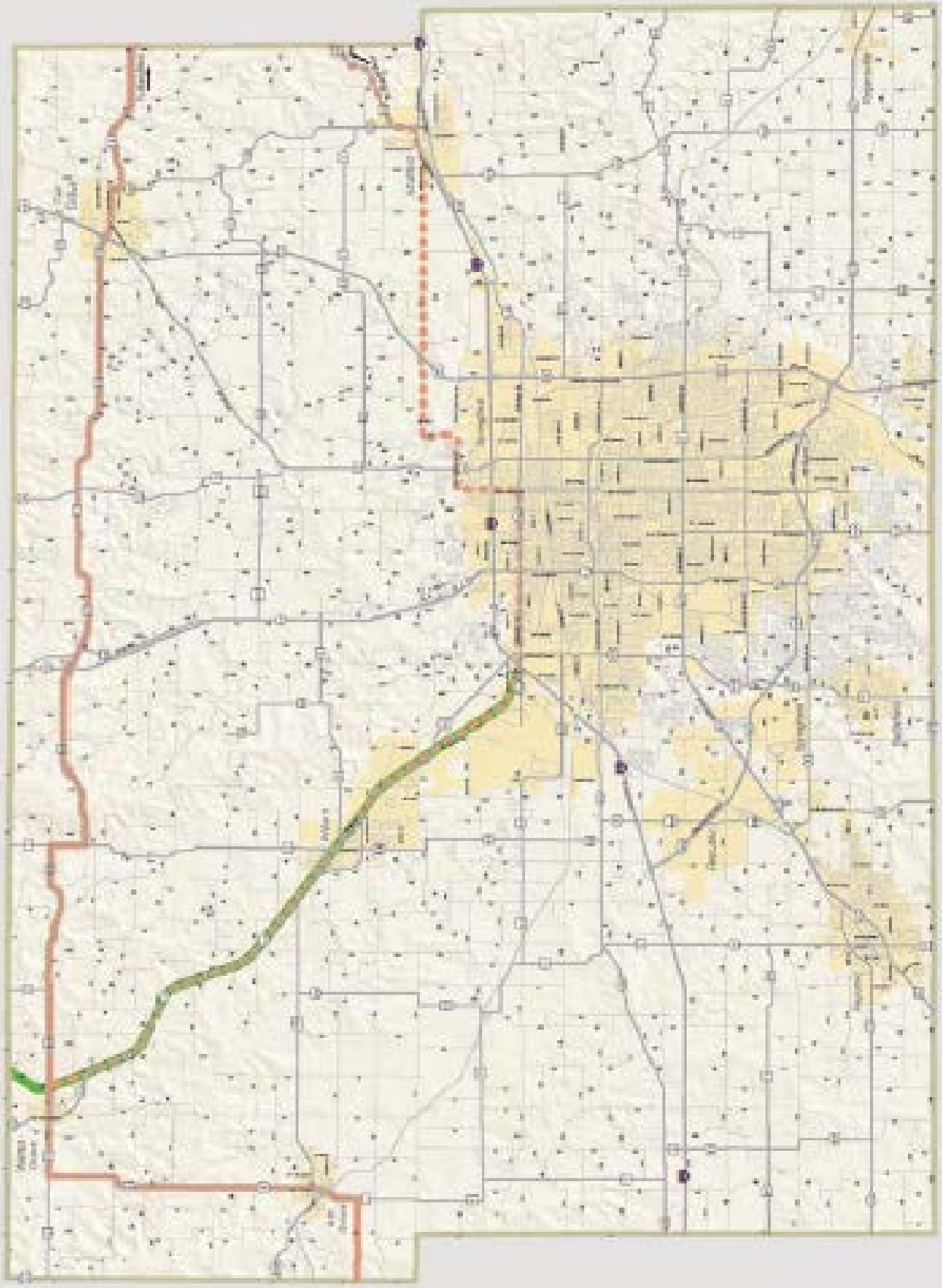
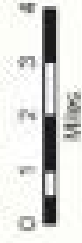
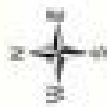
It may be possible to develop and list an alternate route thereby giving the cyclists a choice. Working with Adventure Cycling, the county should proceed with establishing an alternate route option for the TA to bring it closer to Springfield. The cost of this is one of administration time, and the results could bring increased tourism spending in to Springfield. This action would also promote the TA route much better to local cyclists who would find themselves cycling parts of the alternative route in local rides.



Trans-America Trail Greene County

Existing Route &
Proposed
Alternate Route

- Existing Route
- Proposed Alternate Route
- Proposed Highline Trail



Special Routes

Fair Grove, Missouri

The community of Fair Grove in Greene County is a great example of how a community can accept and capitalize on bicycle tourism. The TA route runs through Fair Grove and for years cyclists have been allowed to camp in the local park area and grounds near the historic Wommack Mill. The community offers a grocery store for food resupply as well as a small choice of restaurants.

Most importantly, Fair Grove has become known for having a post office right on the TA route. This amenity affords cyclists an opportunity to arrange mail-drops containing clothing, camp supplies or equipment needs delivered to them in route. It also provides an opportunity for cyclists to lighten their loads by sending away unneeded supplies. Fair Grove has done a great job in making cyclists feel welcome in their community.

Fast Facts

In 2011, the Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts conducted a national study of employment impact of building pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure. It found that for each \$1 million spent on bicycle infrastructure, 11.4 jobs were created. Pedestrian-only projects created 10 jobs for every \$1 million. Multi-use trails created 9.6 jobs for every \$1 million. Road and highway projects created only 7.8 jobs per \$1 million.



Wommack Mill and the town of Fair Grove are important features of the TransAmerica Trail/U.S. Bike Route 76 alternative route proposal. Features such as historic buildings and quaint main street areas have shown to be a major draw for cycling tourists when they choose an area in which to spend their time and money.

Special Routes

Mountain Biking

Given cycling's current popularity in the Midwest, and regionally in Missouri and northwest Arkansas, it is important to include mountain biking (single-track biking) among local attractions. While mountain biking has remained level in national participation, we are seeing an increasing interest in our area. Additionally, the current development of biking trails and bike parks is encouraging a new generation of participants to take up the sport. Mountain biking as a destination sport is also on the increase, with people traveling between 2-12 hours to reach trails and venues offering challenges and opportunities. These visits last from a few hours to several days.

Locally

Until 1997, the nearest location for Springfield participants in the sport of single-track mountain biking was Busiek State Forest, 30 minutes south of town, or the Springfield-Greene County Park Board's Ritter Springs Park on the north side of town. Due to overuse at Ritter Spring Park, biking as well as horseback riding were discontinued in 1997. That same year, with leadership from Ozark Greenways and support from local cyclists, a new network of single-track trails were laid out near the Northwest Water Treatment Plant on city owned property. Since that time, the area known as the Sac River Mountain Bike Trail has gone through a variety of route changes and trail improvements for rider experience and safety.

In 2010, a new single-track club was formed locally called the Midwest off Road Cyclists. (MORC). This club has been high-energy since its start in promoting trail development, providing

volunteers, and undergoing training for proper trail stewardship and design. In 2012, the group successfully developed a pavilion at the Sac River Trail trailhead to stage events and training workshops from. The formation of MORC demonstrates the high interest in the Greene County area for good single-track facilities. MORC not only holds volunteer work days at the Sac River Trail, but also volunteers in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Conservation at Busiek State Forest. The groups also worked with Ozark Greenways to implement a beginner level single-track trail within the Frisco Highline Trail corridor. Future plans include a 10-mile single-track trail running parallel to the main Frisco Highline Trail. This effort is being led by MORC and A&B Bicycle shop.

In August 2013, a new non-profit mountain bike trail developer, TrailSpring, created and opened Two Rivers Bike Park in Highlandville, Missouri. This state-of-the-art bike park offers challenging obstacles for riders of all abilities. Two Rivers is built on private property and was developed with private funds. It is open to the public and demonstrates the best current trail building techniques and features in a single-track riding facility. The trail design and features at Two Rivers are of such quality that this park is attracting cyclists from outside the area for weekend rides and special events.

National Economics of Bicycling

The most frequently cited participation statistics in the U.S. are produced by a research group called the Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF), which tracks outdoor recreation and publishes the annual Outdoor Recreation Participation Study.

Special Routes

According to a 2010 study prepared by the Outdoor Foundation, 60 million adult Americans (18 years of age and older) bicycle each year. Bicycling creates major economic growth in the United States:

- \$133 billion annual contribution to U.S. economy
- Supports nearly 1.1 million jobs across the U.S.
- Produces \$53.1 billion annually in retail sales and services
- Generates \$6.2 billion in bicycling gear sales and services
- Consumes \$46.9 billion in bicycling trip-related expenditures
- Generates \$17.7 billion in annual federal and state tax revenue
- Provides sustainable growth in rural communities

Key Pieces of Information for Mountain Biking

- Mountain biking is a very popular activity in the U.S., with nearly 40 million participants annually.
- Mountain biking participation peaked in 2001, and has remained relatively steady since then.
- Mountain biking participation is about half of hiking participation, but much larger than other trail activities.

Many studies can be found which cite the economic benefits related to mountain biking. Below are a few results of recent studies:

- In 2010, mountain bike trails at Raystown Lake, PA, attracted more than 25,000 visitors, 2.5 times more than predicted. Mountain bikers brought \$1.2 million in spending to the region. ~Wimpey, J., and Maguire, F., 2011~

- Mountain bikers contribute an estimated \$25 million to the Fruita, Colorado economy, approximately 15 percent of the annual budget for the entire Mesa County. ~LeCarner, T., 2011~
- Mountain bike trails in the Chequamegon Area of Northern Wisconsin brought \$1.17 million to the area's economy in 1997. ~Sumathi, N., and D. Berard, 1997~
- A 1996 study estimated that mountain bike tourism brings \$8.4 to \$8.8 million to Moab, Utah's economy annually. ~Fix, P., and J. Loomis, 1996~
- Recreational bicycling brings more than \$924 million to the state of Wisconsin every year. ~Grabow, M., et al., 2010~
- If resident and non-resident recreational cycling increased 20% in Wisconsin, it would create \$184 million in economic activity and generate 2,638 additional jobs. ~Grabow, M., et al., 2010~
- The average bicycle shop has 6 full-time employees. With approximately 4,200 specialty bicycle retailers in the U.S., this totals 25,620 people employed full-time by these retailers. ~National Bicycle Dealer Association, 2009~
- Trails in the Miami Valley of Ohio attract 1 million visitors who spend up to \$16 million on goods and services related to their use of the trails every year. ~Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2009~
- The quality of bicycling in the northern Outer Banks region of North Carolina positively impacts vacationers' planning: 12% report staying three to four days longer to bicycle, while 43% report that bicycling is an important factor in their decision to come to the area, and 53% report that bicycling will strongly influence their decision to return to the area in the future. ~North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, 2004~

Special Routes

Summary from 2012 Bicycling Feasibility Study Commissioned by TrailSpring for Springfield

Springfield has a number of excellent recreational opportunities available to its residents, but the city lacks a significant infrastructure of native surface trails. Single track trails are an important part of many vibrant communities, and while Springfield is a little behind in the development of native surface trails, it is well positioned to develop such systems.

The relative lack of high quality mountain biking opportunities in the region should be looked upon as an opportunity for Springfield. The city offers a good variety of interesting topography, geology, and land-scapes that will provide good settings for trails. Underutilized lands in and around Springfield that can be further explored for their suitability for trails development.

The Ozark Greenways trail network is expanding and will provide increased interconnectivity between a variety of recreational and cultural sites across the city. Additionally, having the ability to start with a relatively blank canvas in many of the areas under consideration for new trails will

provide planners and designers with opportunities to develop outstanding systems of interconnected trails.

The mountain biking community in Springfield is increasing its trail stewardship responsibilities and developing its ability to educate the community about the health and social benefits of native surface shared-use trails and mountain biking. The trails community in Springfield is becoming increasingly well known for its advocacy work and trail maintenance efforts. This good standing will be useful as this group looks to make a stronger case for Springfield's trails.

Adding native surface trails to an area is one of the most cost-effective ways to provide a community with increased, accessible recreational opportunities. The importance of the many community health benefits derived from such developments cannot be over-emphasized.

Trails energize communities. Where there are trails people are more active and economies have another way to grow. A study by the Outdoor Industry Foundation titled, "The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy," estimates that active outdoor recreation



Special Routes

(bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting, paddling, snow sports, wildlife viewing, trail-running, hiking, and climbing) contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

Mountain Biking Conclusion

Given that the intent of this project is to consider the possibilities of Greene County becoming a bicycle destination, it is advisable that mountain biking be included in the formula, offering opportunities for economic growth as well as health and fitness benefits for local residents.

Partnerships with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, MORC, TrailSpring, and Ozark Greenways should be explored and encouraged as we seek to expand mountain-biking opportunities for the community. A simple but aggressive

marketing strategy for attracting visitors to Greene County should be implemented once there are more quality facilities developed for this type of biking. With the current amount of trail on the ground, the area is well on its way to achieving this goal.

Marketing and promotion support should be given to events currently active, including the Black Locust and Omba Caramba Races held at Sac River Trail.

Bonus Usage—Trail Running and Hiking

Mountain bike trails double as trails for hiking and running as well. Trail running is very popular in the Ozarks. The Dogwood Canyon 25k/50k Trail Run sells out each year - up to 500 runners in 2013.

“Bicycle tourism is varied and can take shape in many different forms. Everything from the logistical miracles of large event rides to popular biking destinations, all the way to solo self-supported bike tourists. What is remarkable about bicycle tourism is that it can occur virtually anywhere there is a place available to ride a bike. Unlike skiing or surfing, which are dependent on particular geographical features, people ride bikes on mountains, quiet country roads, in cities, on beach paths, and even on snow. It is the sort of tourist activity that almost any region can foster and promote.” ~Russ Roca, *The Path Less Traveled*~



Special Events

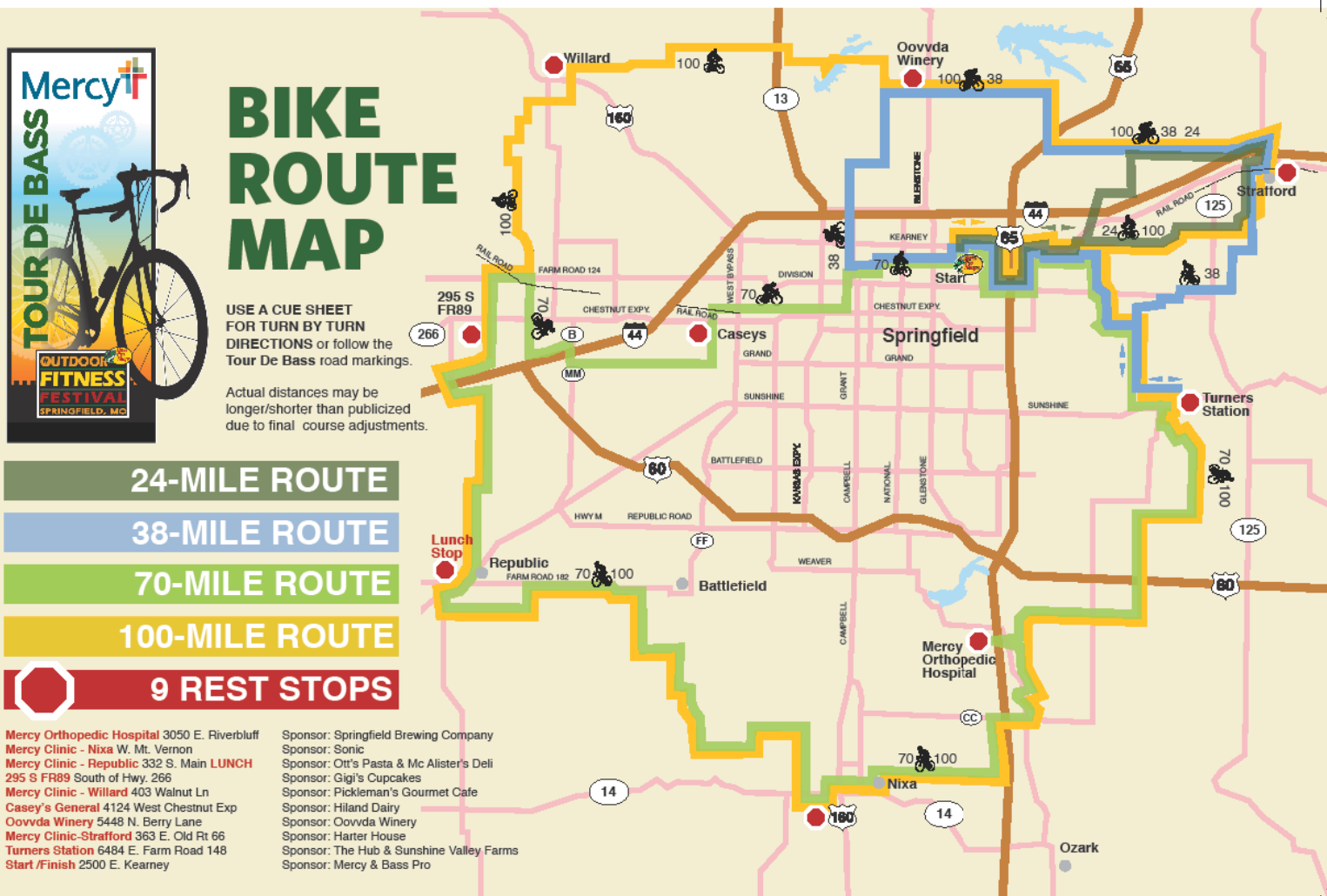
Geotourism

As special events related to cycling are a big part of geotourism, the following points should be kept in mind as potential benefits to be gained from such an endeavor related to event planning and the promotion of events:

- Seek to capture and protect authenticity of place
- Nourishes small and medium business which, reflect the character and nuances of each locale.
- Utilize tourism economics as a means to protect and preserve sensitive environments; natural wonders, our history, culture, and lore.
- Promote active outdoor recreation and

- exploration of our local environment and “back yard” features/ attractions.
- Unite rural communities with neighbors, introduces visitors, and can promote an area with a new and creative approach.

As a research task for this plan writers attended the 2013 National Bicycle Tourism Conference. The four day conference is organized by the National Bicycle Tour Network an organization of bike-tour professionals founded in 1990. This organization is a service that matches touring cyclists with the best tours available from around the world. Collectively the Bicycle Tour Network represents hundreds of tour directors offering multi-day, non-competitive bicycle



The 2013 Tour de Bass attracted 426 participants from 9 states - 166 riders took the 38-mile route and 92 took the 100-mile century loop.

Special Events

tours. The conference offered an excellent array of educational session, on professional tour development, tour/event planning, tour organization, marketing/ promotion, mapping, economic development and cycling trends.

The task of attending this conference and networking with tour directors/organizations from across the country strengthen the assumptions and recommendation in this plan that Greene County has a great opportunity for a lead organization, club, agency, or private individuals to capitalize on bicycle tourism possibilities in this area.

The key to any successful venture would be the consideration of asking the question, what you have that you can tempt people with, what is unique that a visitor cannot get elsewhere, and is that enough to get their attention to spend time in your community.

The best advantage Greene County and Springfield have is in adapting and utilizing per-existing assets which do not require a large investment in infrastructure. As pointed out earlier in this plan the Greene County road system is a very big plus for this type of endeavor.

A challenging but necessary element of promoting a local are regardless of size or even attractions is the understanding and knowledge of local residents to give directions and pass out verbal information. Regardless of the organizations or partners engaged in bicycle tourism project an investment in marketing the product, and local hospitality awareness & training is critical. This training can take on a wide range of initiatives

from a formal curriculum for front line service employees to the more practiced word of mouth information exchange with key parties. Many people might ask the question; just what is bicycle tourism? The Bicycle Tour Network defines bicycle tourism as: "Any travel related activity for the purpose of pleasure which incorporates a bicycle."

Special events such as tours, rides, races and rally's all fit into the definition as does a local resident out for a weekend or afternoon bike ride whether it be on a road or a local trail.

Currently there are several bicycle events in Greene County, from the many weekly rides offered by Spring Bike to the traditional Queen City Century in June to the Tour-de-Bass in October. The Queen City and Tour-de-Bass are the larger rides and both offer a variety of short distances with the main draw being the century loop which is well established in the county but not labeled or marked at all.

The Queen City Century which is organized by Spring Bike has been around for many years and is primarily directed to local Spring Bike membership. The route that has been established for many years is the same as the annual Tour-de-Bass sponsored by Bass Pro Shops which has been offered in the fall for the past 6 years.

In a 2013 membership survey asking members of Spring Bike if they would "... like to see the Queen City become a much larger ride,..." 77.8% indicated that they would like to see an event similar to the Big Dam Bridge ride in Little Rock or the Tour de Corn in East Prairie Missouri. The participation level in this case could raise both the Tour de Bass and the Queen City Century to a much greater number. While these

Special Events

participation numbers are adequate for a local ride there exists a much greater potential to attract cyclist to the area from a much border region. To date locally these current rides lack aggressive marketing and a committed organized effort locally.

Why might bicycle tourism be of interest to the future of Greene County? Taking a look at some figures from the 2013 National Bicycle Tourism Conference, we see that communities/regions that have established ride events, promote a safe ride environment, and market their community uniqueness stand to gain greatly from this form of tourism.

- Wisconsin 2010 cycling benefit—\$1.5 billion
- Iowa 2012 cycling related economic and health benefits Iowa—\$365 million
- Minnesota's Root River County Trail in annual cycling benefit—\$25 million
- State of Oregon annual cycling benefit—\$400 million
- A State of Oregon study found that bicycle travelers spent 20% more than other visitors
- Europe annual value of bicycle tourism—\$44 billion

Venues of Greene County

For special events Greene County's greatest bicycle facility is without a doubt the Frisco Highline Trail... A recent Tourism and Economic Infrastructure study on the Root River Trail in Houston County Minnesota concluded that the Root River Trail has an \$11.3 million dollar value to the county in terms of a built facility. That is a fairly small investment on a feature that today has an annual tourism benefit of \$25 million. Another

mid-west trail system with equal success is the Raccoon Valley Trail in Polk County Iowa. The Raccoon Valley Trail system spends \$25,000 annually to market their trail.

The county and other partners in conjunction with Ozark Greenways the owners and managers of the trail should develop, fund and implement an aggressive and comprehensive marketing plan for the Frisco Highline Trail. After twenty years of trail development the Frisco Highline Trail has a capital investment of \$2,472,308 as a recreational facility. Greater efforts should be directed to the tourism benefits that have not yet been cultivated.

Bicycle tour riders are considered a niche market. Yet they are out there and may not always be where or who you might think they are. Consider more people bicycle than participates in golf, tennis, or skiing combined. This covers all people on all bikes from the day user to the racer and the touring cyclists. However when it comes to the touring target we find that:

- 52% earn \$100,000 /annually or greater
- 10% earn \$200,000 /annually or greater
- 32% spent more than \$1,000 last year on gear or related travel
- 24% have 4-or more bikes
- 34% purchased a bike last year

History of Tour de Corn—An Example for Missouri

Tour de Corn is a ride that takes place in East Prairie Missouri a community of just 3,176. Tour de Corn began when a local cyclist, Mike Bryant, had the idea of starting a charity ride in East Prairie.

He approached Silvey Barker, then coordinator for East Prairie Tourism, with his idea. He said, "I wish the

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Office of Tourism would sponsor a ride.” The potential was discussed for a few minutes, and Mike said, “I don’t know what we’d call it, but I think it can be done!” That was in 2001.

Soon after the conversation, a committee of local cyclists and interested citizens gathered to form the Tour de Corn Committee. Today, the Tour de Corn Committee continues to be the backbone of the ride. Attendance at Tour de Corn has grown from 175 in 2002 to over 800 in 2011.

The Tour de Corn Committee works year-round to create the best ride possible for the one-day event in June. Many of our cyclists have been attending since the first ride in 2002, and they continue to be our best advertisement – helping spread the word about Tour de Corn.

~Excerpted from TourdeCorn.com~

If a community of 3,000 can offer an event that attracts almost 1,000 visitors to their community what might one of the communities in OTO region have the potential to offer?

