

NEBRASKA
PUBLICATIONS
CLEARINGHOUSE

DEC 22 1998

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION
LINCOLN, NE 68508



A Network of Discovery

A Comprehensive Trails Plan for the
State of Nebraska

**Prepared for the Nebraska Energy Office and the Nebraska
Department of Economic Development by
RDG Martin Shukert and Ciaccio Dennell Group
July, 1994**

The Nebraska Trails Plan Committee

This material was prepared with the support of funds returned to the Nebraska Energy Office on behalf of Nebraska consumers by court order to effect restitution for oil overcharges by the Exxon Corporation and administered through a program authorized under the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Grant #DE-FG47-92CE60420. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Energy or the Nebraska Energy Office.

Major funding for the publication of this Statewide Trails Plan was provided by the Nebraska Energy Office, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the National Park Service.

Diana Allen
Historic Trails Researcher

Chris Beutler
Nebraska State Senator

Gerry Bowen
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District

Kimberly Brown
Nebraska Energy Office

Tom Doering
Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Margo Ems
Nebraska Horse Council

Kathleen "Pat" Foote
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Larry Foster
Omaha Parks and Recreation Department

Ralph Gabrysh
US Army Corps of Engineers

Gary Gibbs
TBQ Sport Club, Inc.

Ross Greathouse
Great Plains Trails Network

John Hitt
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Ginger Jensen
Harlan County Tourism

Glenn Johnson
Lower Platte South Natural Resources District

Derald Kohles
Nebraska Department of Roads

Ed Kosola
Federal Highway Administration

Ken Lemke
Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Claudia Lindley
Office of Senator Chris Beutler

Mike Lundeen
Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Dave Miller
Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Jean Monnier
Nebraska State Snowmobile Association

Jim Morgan
Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department

Dan Nitzel
TBQ Sport Club, Inc.

Liz Ohlogge
US Forest Service

Jim Pearson
Nebraska Department of Roads

Bob Puschendorf
Nebraska State Historical Society

Ted Schaefer
US Army Corps of Engineers

Ken Sieckmeyer
Nebraska Department of Roads

Dolores Silkworth
Omaha Parks and Recreation Department

Don Van Driest
Nebraska Trails Council

Sandra Washington
National Park Service

Table of Contents



1. Introduction	1
2. A Vision for Nebraska Trails	7
Principles of Trails Development	7
Benefits of a Trails System	10
Resource Corridors: A Concept for the Network of Discovery	17
3. Trail Resources and Opportunities	21
Recreation and Open Space Resources	24
Historic and Interpretive Resources	32
Existing Trail Resources	38
Case Studies	41
Trails Development Opportunities	52
On-Road Resources	60
Focus Groups	65
4. The Resource Corridors	87
Interpretive Themes	98
5. Constituencies and Trail Types	101
Bicyclists	104
Pedestrians	106
Equestrians	108
Cross-Country Skiers	110
In-line Skaters and Other Wheeled Users	111
Off-Highway Vehicles	112
Snowmobilers	114
Canoeists	116
Other Major Constituent Groups	117
Trail Types	123
Trail Development Issues	135

Table of Contents



6. The Trails Development Plan	143
Resource Corridor Plans	145
Pine Ridge	146
Monument Valley	150
Ogallala	154
Red Willow	158
Niobrara	162
Sandhills	166
Platte Canyons	170
Big Bend	174
Central	178
Republican Valley	182
Upper Elkhorn	186
Loup and Cedar Valley	190
Lewis and Clark	194
Lower Elkhorn	198
Metropolitan	202
Southeast	210
 The Network of Discovery: A Statewide Trails Plan	 216
7. Implementation Recommendations	221
Delivery System	224
Funding	229
Application Process and Priorities	234
Securing Trail Corridors	236
State Departmental Policies	240
8. Appendix and Bibliography	245
Community Trails Inventory	246
Bibliography	251

Maps and Tables



Maps

Recreation and Open Space Resources	31
Historic and Interpretive Resources	37
Existing and Planned Trails	51
Trails Development Opportunities	59
On-Road Resources	63
Resource Corridors	89
Pine Ridge Resource Corridor	149
Monument Valley Resource Corridor	153
Ogallala Resource Corridor	157
Red Willow Resource Corridor	161
Niobrara Resource Corridor	165
Sandhills Resource Corridor	169
Platte Canyons Resource Corridor	173
Big Bend Resource Corridor	177
Central Resource Corridor	181
Republican Valley Resource Corridor	185
Upper Elkhorn Resource Corridor	189
Loup and Cedar Valley Resource Corridor	193
Lewis and Clark Resource Corridor	197
Lower Elkhorn Resource Corridor	201
Metropolitan Resource Corridor	207
Southeast Resource Corridor	213
Nebraska American Discovery Trail Route	217
Rail-Watch Corridors	239
A Network of Discovery: Statewide Plan	Enclosure

Tables

Participation in Outdoor Recreation and Trail Activities, 1993	12
Existing and Planned Trails	47
Community Trails Inventory: All Trails by Mileage	50
Resource Corridors and Interpretive Themes	99
Trail Use Impact on Nearby and Adjacent Properties	118
Trails Types: Application to User Groups	124
Comparison of Estimated Trail Surface Costs per Mile in Nebraska	136
Comparison of Trails Surfaces	137
Existing and Planned Trails: Communities under 2,500	246
Existing and Planned Trails: Communities over 2,500	248

A NETWORK OF DISCOVERY

In the narrow band of dusk I
ride
away from duty toward the
city bike path,
pockets of cool air
lifting the blanket of summer,
and suddenly I'm afloat on
balloon tires
taking the county dirt road. . .

*From "Bike Ride"
by Twyla Hansen*



*Above: Historic Oak Ballroom in
Schuyler's South Park.*

Preface

The preparation of this plan has truly been a voyage of discovery for its authors. As we have travelled the state from Harrison to Falls City and from Benkelman to Ponca, we have seen many things and talked to hundreds of people. These experiences have expanded our own knowledge of Nebraska and further convinced us of the beauty and nobility of this state and its communities. We have become enthusiastic about the capacity of a trails network to open these experiences to others and hope that this plan can help realize this possibility. Just as trails were central to the history of our state, we are confident that trails will also be a central part of Nebraska's future.

This plan would not have been possible without the assistance of many people. The members of the Nebraska Trails Plan Committee, the central advisory group for this plan, gave freely of their time and talents to create a better and more complete document. We are also grateful to the over 400 people who attended focus group meetings as well as many others who spoke to us on the main streets of Nebraska's towns and offered other insights that contributed to the development of this plan.

We especially appreciate the efforts of dedicated staff members in the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Nebraska Energy Office, the Nebraska Department of Roads, the National Park Service, and other public agencies for their commitment to the state and to trail development. Several people have been especially important to this process. We have greatly appreciated the support, patience, insight, and knowledge of Tom Doering of the Department of Economic Development, who managed this project for the state. Kim Brown of the Nebraska Energy Office, the granting agency, Sandra Washington of the National Park Service, and Pat Foote of the Game and Parks Commission have spent many hours helping us perfect this plan. Also, Jim Pearson of the Nebraska Department of Roads implemented the state's trails development program through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and has offered valuable assistance on this plan.

Finally, we appreciate the work of the hundreds of Nebraskans who have been galvanized by the vision of a state trails system and who have selflessly volunteered their time and talents toward the creation of a Network of Discovery. The ultimate realization of such a network will be a legacy to their pioneering efforts.

- *Martin H. Shukert, AICP*
RDG Martin Shukert

- *David J. Ciaccio, ASLA*
Ciaccio Dennell Group

A NETWORK OF DISCOVERY