

Update Process

The Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative Addendum, Marketing Brochure, and Website Template were spearheaded by the DLGI co-chairs, Anita Twardesky, of Riverside Kayak Connection, and Mary Bohling, of Michigan Sea Grant. The Downriver Community Conference again served as fiduciary for the project and the update was funded with assistance from corporate sponsors US Steel, Marathon Ashland, and DTE Energy Foundation. Representatives from the corporate sponsors provided input and review during the development process.

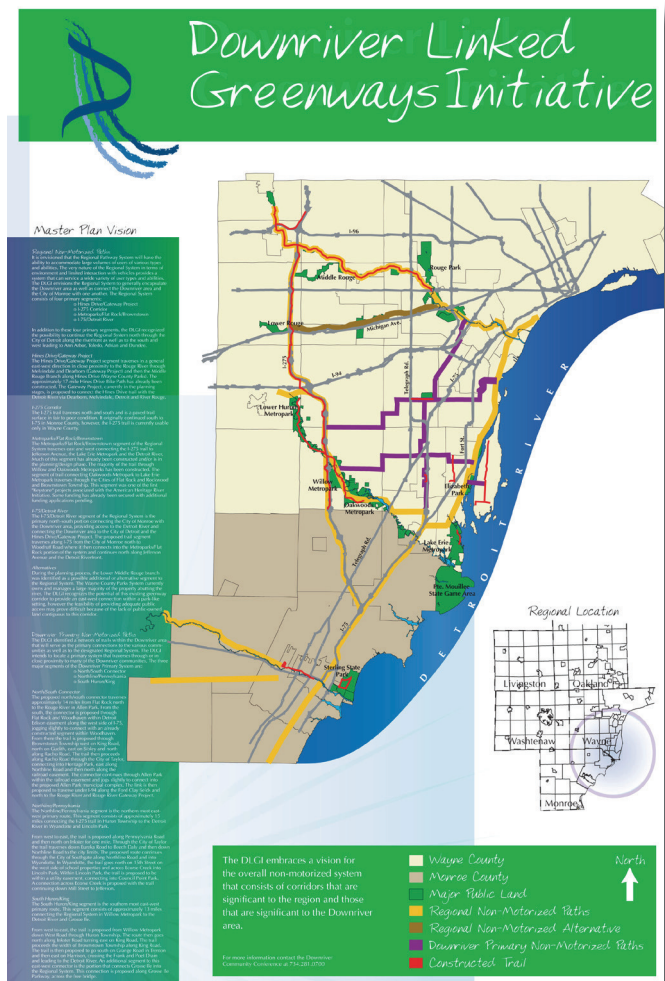
Once draft documents were complete, the DLGI held 3 stakeholder input/review meetings with assistance from local State Representatives Barbara Farrah, Ed Clemente, Gino Polidori, Hoon-Yung Hopgood, Kathleen Law, and Kate Ebli. The 3 input meetings were held:

- March 18, 2008
Stinson Center
Ecorse
- March 18, 2008
Gibraltar Community Center
- March 24, 2008
Van Buren Township Offices

Input from these meetings was incorporated into the final products. The complete Addendum, Marketing Brochure, and Website Template were unveiled at the Downriver Summit held on May 12, 2008 at the Flat Rock Community Center.

History of DLGI

At the 1999 Downriver Summit Meeting, it became apparent that there was a significant need in the Downriver area to improve on quality of life issues. One of the quality of life issues raised by major employers in the area stated that families and employees need connected walking and biking paths. From there, former Representative George Mans and Congressman John Dingell spearheaded the start of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative (DLGI) meetings to gauge the various communities level of interest. It soon became clear that local and regional interest in the development of connected, non-motorized trails was very high. Around the same time, the Detroit River had been designated a National Heritage River, making additional funding and resources available for improvements to the riverfront.



After several meetings, it was evident that a Master Plan was needed if the Downriver communities wanted to present a united front and apply for funding. Many of the Downriver communities as well as private institutions contributed funding for development of the original DLGI Master Plan. The intended purpose of the 2001 DLGI Master Plan was to coordinate the Downriver communities' development efforts in regard to non-motorized transportation. Rather than planning, designing and constructing non-motorized facilities to benefit only individual communities, the DLGI had the foresight and vision to embrace a plan that benefits the greater good. The DLGI believed in the wisdom of establishing a Primary Downriver System which feeds and links into a rapidly forming regional and state-wide system.

After the original Master Plan was completed in 2001, the DLGI communities and partners were quick to begin

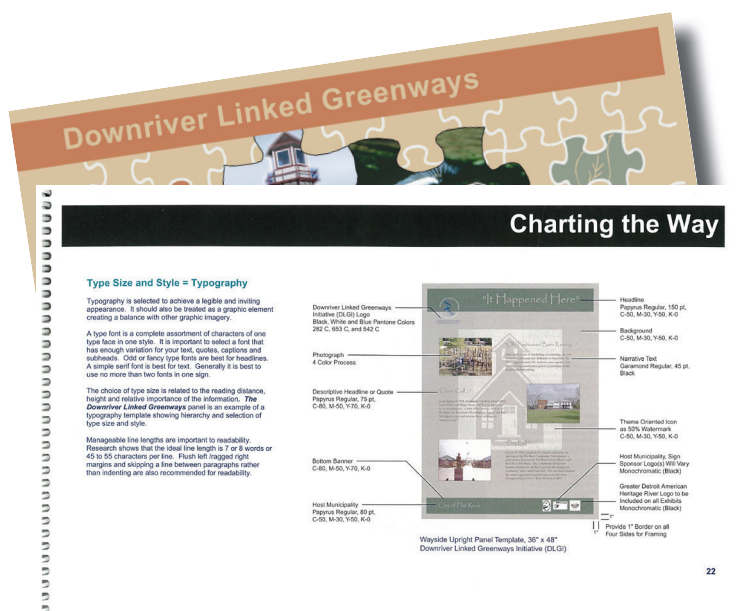
implementation focusing on the design and construction of the East-West Connector, the North-South Connector, a Wayfinding Manual, and cooperative efforts related to the International Wildlife Refuge, Heritage River Water Trail, Byways to Flyways, the formation of a Michigan Recreation and Parks Association Trails Committee, implementation of local trail connectors into the larger non-motorized system, and much more.

Progress and Happenings

Since the publishing of the original Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative Master Plan in 2001, numerous related efforts, activities, and initiatives have moved forward with positive affects on the Downriver region. These are highlighted in this update to illustrate the ever expanding resource-based efforts that closely correlate with the goals and mission of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative.

Wayfinding Manual

A Wayside Companion book was developed for the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative in 2003. The manual, developed by the National Park Service, is a product that evolved out of requests that the NPS receives from outside the National Park System for interpretive training, assistance, and planning. The Wayside Companion is a manual illustrating various design ideas and standards for developing wayfinding exhibits and interpretive signs. The manual also depicts a template for coordinated wayfinding signage for the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative system including colors, fonts, logo, and layout.



Cooperative Conservation Conference – St. Louis

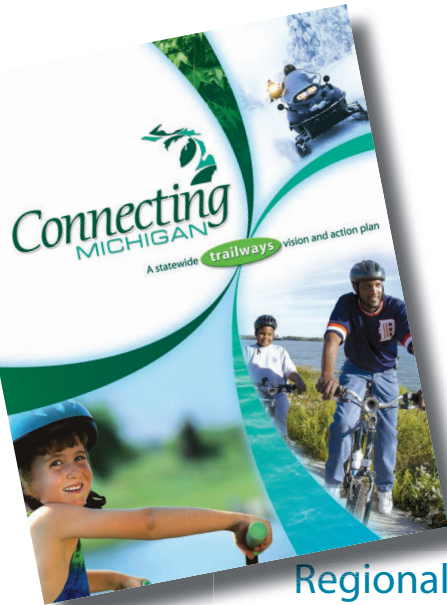
The White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation was held in August 2005 in St. Louis, Missouri to showcase the best cooperative conservation initiatives across the country and establish a conservation agenda for the 21st Century. In total, 37 conservation projects nationwide were highlighted at the conference including cooperative conservation efforts in southeast Michigan. Representatives from Downriver Linked Greenways, Michigan Sea Grant, the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and DTE Energy were invited to discuss the fact that the Detroit-Windsor Metropolitan Area offers world-class water, wildlife, heritage, and recreational opportunities and is becoming a model for cooperative conservation and enhanced quality of life. The transformation in the area was the result of many public-private initiatives (such as DLGI) "working synergistically to deliver cooperative conservation."

Connecting Michigan Plan

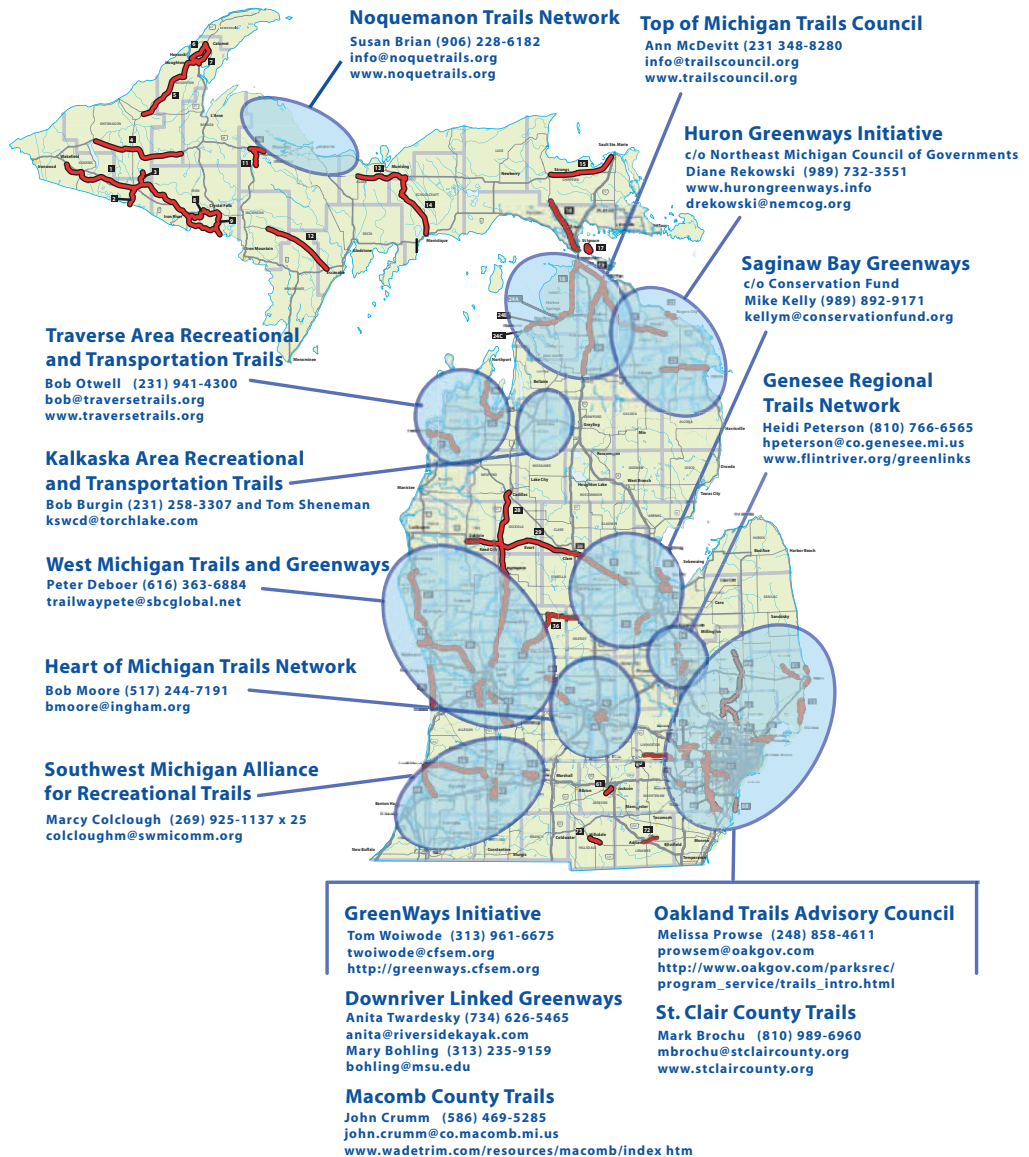
The year-long efforts of 10 task forces on statewide trail issues culminated in 2007 in the release of "Connecting Michigan: A Statewide Trails Vision and Action Plan", a report issued by project partners: Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, and Michigan Recreation and Park Association Trails, Greenways, and Blueways Committee. The task forces each covered distinctly different topics:

- Funding
- Programming
- Promotions
- GIS statewide trails mapping
- On-road connections to trails
- Private property easements
- Multi-use trail design standards
- Advocacy support
- Regional collaboration
- State and local interdepartmental coordination

The deliberations of these task forces comprised of over 100 individuals resulted in 39 goals and 109 action steps. Four overarching goals emerged which form a framework for an interconnected railway network that connects every region of the state.



Regional Trail Initiatives



- Ensure that Michigan's trailway stakeholders have ready access to technical resources and best practices from Michigan and beyond, and across all the many facets of trailways planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, operations, and advocacy.
- Improve Michigan's financial, maintenance, and marketing resources necessary for developing, promoting, enhancing, and sustaining a statewide interconnected trailway system.
- Improve coordination and communication, encourage cooperation, foster new partnerships to support trailway planning, development, management, and programming that enhances the trailway experience.
- Provide Michigan's trailway stakeholders with a compelling statewide trailway vision and a tactical plan to achieve and market the vision.

The Plan and accompanying endorsements are now being used to build momentum for funding, legislative action, and advocacy which will drive the implementation of the Connecting Michigan plan. Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance will monitor the progress of the plan as well as undertake many of the action steps in addition to encouraging other groups to take the lead on other recommendations. MTGA will also dovetail their work with the Governor's state trails initiative, "Michigan Trails at the Crossroads: A Vision for Connecting Michigan", since the two plans work very well together. Coordination will also occur with the Governor's State Trails Advisory Council to improve communications between state, regional, and local trail entities and diverse trail user groups.

MRPA Trails, Greenways, Blueways, and Open Spaces Committee

The Michigan Recreation and Parks Association formed the Trails, Greenways, Blueways, and Open Space Committee in 2006. The Committee promotes a statewide network of trails, greenways, and water trails and also works to enhance the movement of trail advancement nationally and statewide to the trail community. Recreation opportunities are also promoted to enhance quality of life, influencing landscapes and diverse accessibility.

Discover our Wild Side

The "Discover Our Wild Side" project is an initiative spearheaded by the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC) to coordinate and promote the multitude of water, wildlife, and recreational activities and destinations within the southeast Michigan and southwest Ontario region. The Discover Our Wild Side campaign has partnered with numerous stakeholders and agencies such as the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the Essex Region Conservation Authority, Michigan Sea Grant, the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative and others to identify and promote the world-class resource based recreational opportunities in the region. Examples of events and opportunities promoted under the Discover Our Wild Side campaign include the Metroparks, State Game Areas, County Parks, the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail, Byways to Flyways, Detroit RiverWalk, the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, and much more.

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is located along the lower Detroit River and western shoreline of Lake Erie. It was established in 2001 as the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America. The authorized refuge boundary includes islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and waterfront lands along 48 miles of shoreline. The Refuge includes over 5,000 acres of land and focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, over 100 species of fish, and a total of over 300 species of birds. A schematic plan for the Refuge Headquarters site in Trenton has been developed in partnership with Wayne County.

In 2005, the independent, non-profit International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA) formed to build the capacity of the US Fish and Wildlife Service to deliver the mission of the Refuge. The IWRA helps to protect wildlife and support wildlife dependent recreational uses such as hunting, fishing, photography, wildlife observation, interpretation, and environmental education. The mission of the IWRA is to support the Refuge by working through partnerships to protect, conserve and manage the Refuge's wildlife and habitats, and to create exceptional conservation, recreational and educational experiences to develop the next generation of conservation stewards. In 2007, the

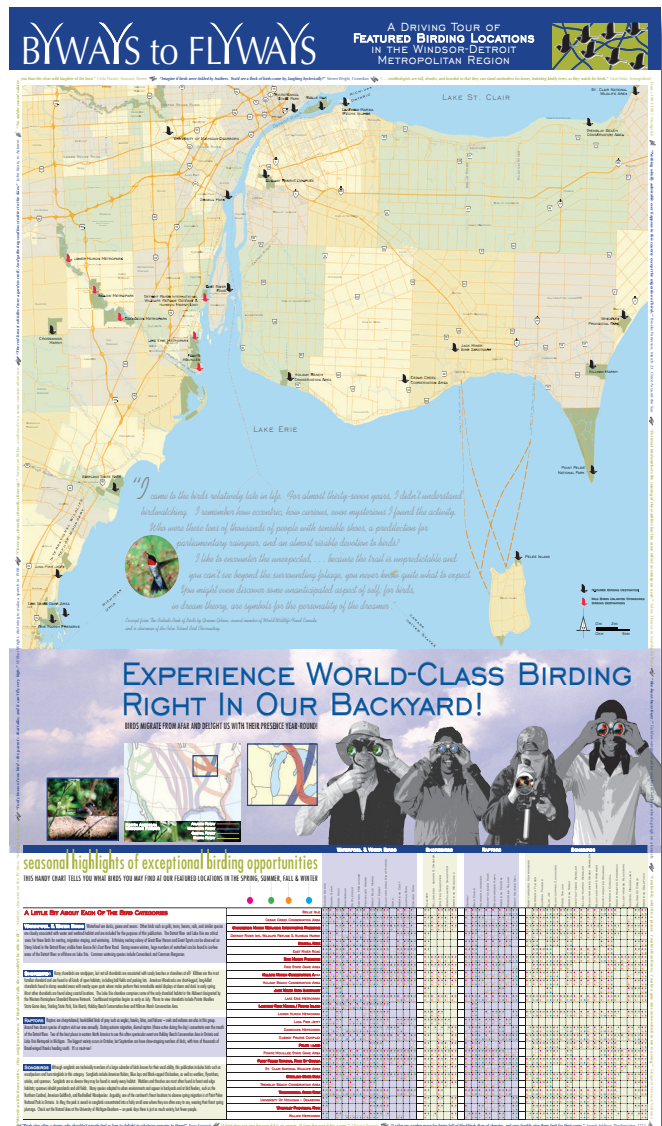


IWRA hired an Executive Director to help connect people to the Refuge, help improve quality of life, and provide an exceptional conservation experience in southeast Michigan.

Byways to Flyways

The Byways to Flyways project is a Bird Driving Tour completed in 2007 by the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance under the leadership of Michigan Sea Grant, and was made possible through funding from the Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc. Pathways to Nature Conservation Fund, in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Metropolitan Affairs Coalition and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with a variety of local organizations also contributed to the project. The Windsor-Detroit metro area offers exceptional opportunities for birding enthusiasts due to its location at the intersection of two major flyways and over 350 species of birds that have been recorded in the region. A Byways to Flyways brochure was developed that features detailed descriptions of 27 sites across

the Windsor-Detroit metro area known for their birding opportunities – including eight Important Birding Areas, providing both novice and expert birders the best times of the year to see some of the region’s most notable feathered friends – the waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and songbirds that call this region home or pass through as part of their annual migration.



courtesy of hamilton anderson