



Get YOUR Green On

Volume 1, Issue 6

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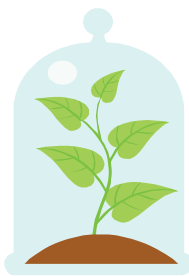
Volume 1, Issue 6

City's Trail System

Small Changes

The cumulative effects of what each of us as individuals do can either devastate (each American's post-workout bottle of water adds up to 2 million bottles sold every 5 minutes) or heal (if every household were to plant native species in their gardens).

When one small change is made by many, or one individual makes several changes, it all adds up to making the environment more sustainable.



Over the last 20 years, the City's trail system has grown from approximately 8 miles to nearly 40 miles of paved, shared-use paths, which link to a larger network of over 300 miles of trails in Central Iowa.

The trail network facilitates all forms of non-motorized users including bicyclists, runners, walkers and in-line skaters. The trails are engineered to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and are plowed shortly after snow events, so they are accessible for all levels of physical ability, year-round.

The City's 2007 Community Attitude and Interest Survey revealed that walking and biking trails are overwhelmingly the most used recreation facility. This indicates that the public recognizes the benefits of trails. These include:

Improved public health - easy access to trails provides an attractive and free health and fitness amenity for residents and enables integration of physical activity into our daily lives.

Enhanced environmental conservation and appreciation - most of the City's trails follow

rivers, creeks and greenways, thereby bringing people closer to nature.

Enable alternative, non-motorized transportation options - When developed into a network which enables bicycling commuters, trails can divert vehicular traffic to non-motorized trail use. In January, the City was awarded an Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program grant of over \$400,000 to develop the first phase of the Des Moines River Trail which will commence at the Meredith Trail and John Pat Dorrian Trails at the Scott Street bridge downtown and run along the south side of the Des Moines River to Cownie Soccer and Baseball Parks. Research indicates that approximately 4 percent of vehicle trips will be redirected to trail trips over the life of the trail preventing over 20,000 kg of carbon monoxide from entering our atmosphere each year the equivalent of removing 77 passenger vehicles from our streets.

In order for bicycling and walking to serve as viable alternative transportation options, there must be safe connections to the on-street network which links to typical daily activities,

Continued on page 2...

Use a reusable water bottle

Jurdy Green™



Have you ever doubted that your decision to recycle a bottle or bring a reusable container makes a difference? If so, here is some news to keep you going.

Compared against a single-use water bottle that is tossed in the garbage; drinking from a reusable water bottle filled with tap water will reduce energy consumption by 85 percent and greenhouse gases by 79 percent!

A 2009 report by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality compared life-cycle energy used by different drinking water options. They found that drinking tap water in a reusable bottle is the best environment choice, by far.

Based on their report, here are our recommendations for living green and staying hydrated:

-Drink tap water- Bottled water costs as much as \$10

per gallon compared to less than a penny per gallon for tap water. In addition, federal water quality standards are usually more rigorous for tap water than for bottled water. Those concerned with taste or quality can also add a filtration system.

-Buy 1 or 2 Reusable water bottles and use them frequently.

- Reusable water bottles are "in"

City's Trail System (continued from page 1)

such as from home to work, shopping, school, and recreational activities. To support this endeavor, the City adopted a Complete Streets policy which provides for bicycling and walking accommodations along with street construction projects; and, the City is completing a Bicycle and Trail Master Plan which will identify and prioritize locations for appropriate on-street bicycle facilities such as bike lanes, bike boulevards, shared lane markings, or side paths.

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Fast Facts

Recycling things to think about:

Enough energy is saved by recycling one aluminum can to run a TV set for three hours.



Glass never wears out—it can be recycled forever.

Recycling one ton of paper can save about 17 trees.



Some things to ponder about trash:

Americans throw away enough aluminum every three months to rebuild the entire commercial air fleet.

Americans throw away the equivalent of more than 30 million trees in newsprint each year.

Americans discard 4 million tons of office paper every year—enough to build a 12 foot high wall of paper from New York to California.

In a lifetime, the average American will throw away 600 times their adult weight in garbage. This means each adult will leave a legacy of approximately 90,000 pounds of trash for their children.

Landfill Facts:

Before you toss the following items into the trash, think about how long the item will remain before it biodegrades:

90 years for an aluminum can



700 years for a plastic bottle



1 million years for a glass bottle

Use a reusable water bottle (continued from page 1)

right now, and come in fun colors and patterns. If you buy too many, though, you'll reduce the benefit of using a reusable bottle.

-If bottled water must be purchased, choose the thinnest bottle and purchase water that is bottled locally.

- This will reduce packaging volume and energy for shipping.



Last, but not least, continue to recycle any bottles you buy.

- We should all continue to recycle bottles and other materials. Recycling that same single-use water bottle we referred to above will reduce life-cycle energy consumption by 24 percent and greenhouse gas emissions by 16 percent.

Email YOUR green ideas to: rawetmore@dmgov.org