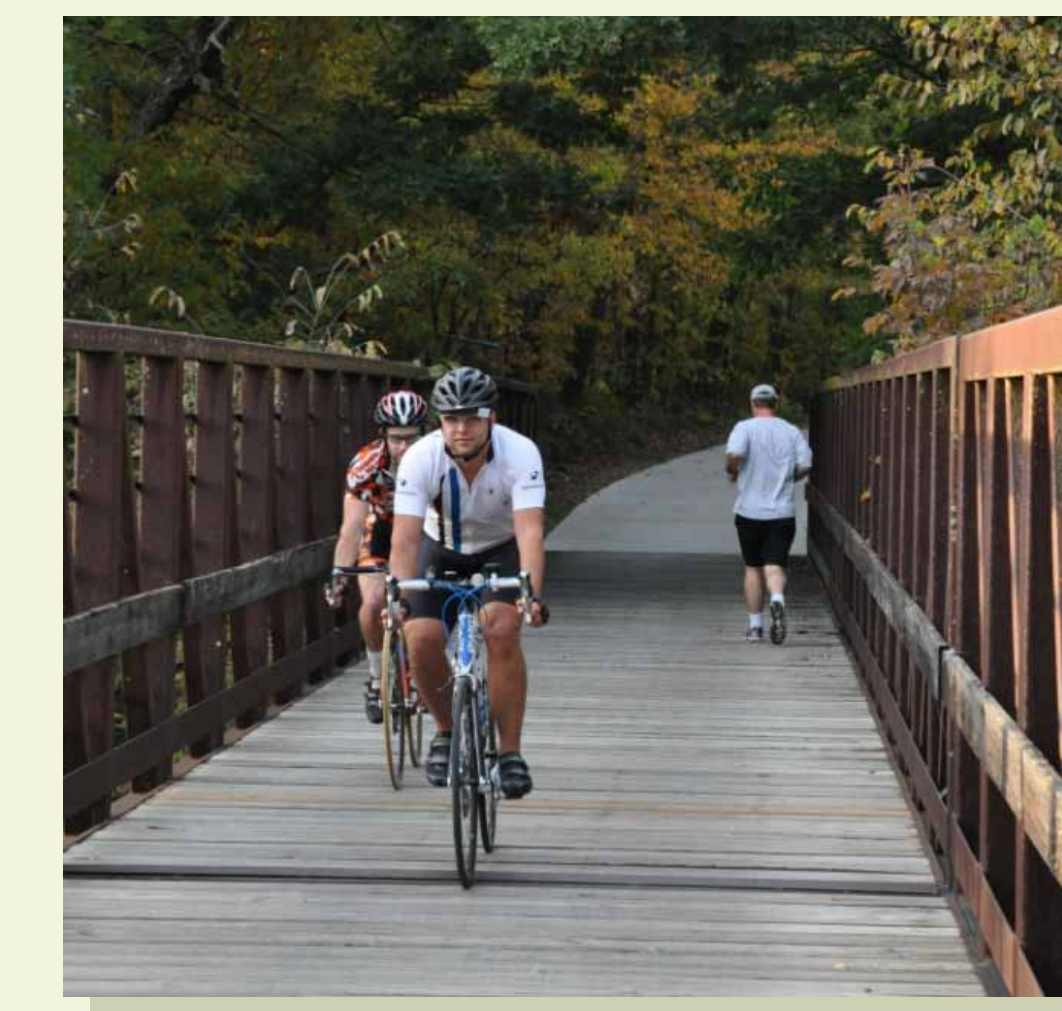


NEAL SMITH TRAIL

The most popular trail at Saylorville Lake is the multi-use Neal Smith Trail. The Neal Smith Trail is a 26 mile paved National Recreation Trail that extends from Des Moines through Saylorville Lake to Big Creek State Park. The Neal Smith Trail allows for year round outdoor activities including hiking, biking, running, rollerblading, snow shoeing, and cross country skiing.

Thirteen miles of this trail are managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with the remaining miles managed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the City of Des Moines.



CONNECTIONS

The Neal Smith Trail has become a focal point for connectivity to adjacent trail systems. Many trail connections are in the planning or proposed stages.

- 1) The City of Johnston currently has plans to construct a trail along Beaver Drive on the west side of Saylorville Lake that would connect to the Neal Smith Trail at the Sycamore Access area.
- 2) The Polk County Conservation Board has plans to connect the High Trestle Trail in northern Polk County to the northern reaches of the Neal Smith Trail in Big Creek State Park.
- 3) The Corps is considering creating a trail across the Saylorville Lake Dam that would connect the Neal Smith Trail and the Beaver Drive Trail.

IMPROVEMENTS

The Neal Smith Trail has been the backbone for the Central Iowa Trail System for years. Bicyclist, walkers, and joggers have taken to the trail in large numbers. But, as the years passed, the trail became increasingly deteriorated. In 2010 the trail was improved by widening, resurfacing, and realigning the Corps managed portion. Several other improvements are proposed for the future.

- Eliminate the shared roadway through Prairie Flower Campground by constructing a standalone trail for the Neal Smith Trail.
- Create a trail spur in Red Feather Prairie to connect to a proposed prairie educational kiosk.
- Develop a group campsite for bicyclists along the Neal Smith Trail in the Prairie Flower Campground.

