

## ***Ankeny to Woodward Trail Improvements Underway***

**November 7, 2006** - Boone County residents may have noticed the work that has been done on the new Ankeny to Woodward trail in the last couple of weeks. Friends of the Trail and Quad County Saddle Club member Dave Terrell has donated many hours of his time to run a road maintainer owned by the Boone County Landfill along the Boone County sections of the trail to level the surface and help keep vegetation under control. The trail now has an improved surface for walking and horseback riding. Although the surface is somewhat soft, it is also in shape to be used by energetic cyclists on mountain bikes.

Plans are for a 10-foot wide paved trail with a natural surface equestrian trail along side on the trail segments connecting Slater, Madrid and Woodward. The new trail will connect to the existing Heart of Iowa Nature Trail in Slater, which is also open for equestrian use. The Polk County section of the trail between Slater and Ankeny will not be open to equestrians.

### **Public Input Meetings to Be Held on Bridge and Trail Design**

Public meetings are being held throughout the next several months to receive public input on the trail and high bridge design and to answer questions the public may have. The meetings are sponsored by the Ankeny to Woodward Trail Steering Committee and Snyder and Associates, the engineering consultant for the trail. Ankeny, Slater, Madrid and Woodward will be meeting



Pictured here are the concrete piers that the trail bridge will be built on. (The railroad took out the steel bridge beams and decking to use to repair another bridge before they sold the railroad corridor to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation for use as a trail, so we have to rebuild.) It is a springtime photo as you can see from the high water where the bridge crosses Saylorville Lake/the Des Moines River. Most of the year the lake is low enough that it goes back to being a river again.

sites.

The first set of meetings will be held in November and two more sets of meetings are planned. All trail users are encouraged to attend. One of the issues yet to be decided is whether bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians can safely share the proposed half-mile-long high bridge over the Des Moines River or should an alternate equestrian route be found.

The engineering consultants will work with bridge engineering firm Shuck Britson and Des Moines artist Dave Dahlquist in designing the high bridge and an overall design theme for the trail. The theme may incorporate public art that reflects the history and other characteristics of the area and it is expected there will be opportunities for local artists to be involved. The design process is expected to last through spring. Approval of the design by state and federal agencies is required before bids can be let for construction. Meanwhile, the trail is usable as a natural surface trail. All trail communities are working on ideas for trailheads.

For more information on public meeting dates and locations or getting involved with the trail, contact Becky Roorda, Madrid Friends of the Trail, 515-795-2647 or [rroorda@iowatelecom.net](mailto:rroorda@iowatelecom.net). She can put you in touch with Steering Committee members in any of the cities and counties along the trail.