

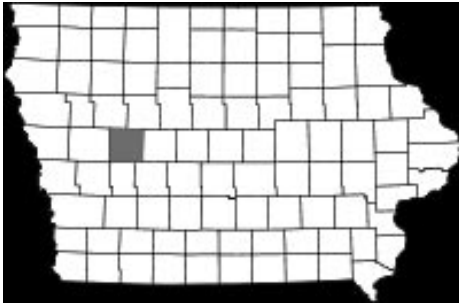
Carroll County Trails

by Tammy Kraus

I am a member of the Carroll County Saddle Club. We have been working with the Carroll County-area DNR to improve local areas for equine-related usage. Because of recent government funding cuts, we know it's time to "step up to the plate," and do whatever we can to help out, with donations of both time and materials.

The DNR is planning on implementing a trail pass system for all Carroll County equine trails at the cost of \$10 to \$15 a year, which should help to defer some of the improvement costs.

First on our to-do list is the popular Dickson Timber, where the DNR has now posted the back area for equine camping only. It is a favorite, and usually overflowing on the weekends. The DNR will be putting in more campsites and will be redoing the pen area with the help of our club. Unfortunately, the pens sit at the bottom of a



hill and are always wet. Our club will be erecting roofs over the pens late this fall or early next spring, and a fee will be charged to use the pens there. Further, a fine may be implemented on those pen users who

do not clean up after themselves. In the past, there was no place to put the muck, so the pens were sometimes left a mess. The DNR will be putting in a compost bin. Between the fines, the roofs, and the compost bin, this usage problem should be solved.

Next is the paved Sauk Rail Trail. It is a bicycle trail that runs from the 116-acre Swan Lake to Lake View, Iowa. After two years of negotiations, our club has finally gained permission to construct a trail alongside the bike trail. This fall, we cleared roughly two miles

of trail along the bike trail, which then leads into a wooded area. We are just starting to ride in the area to mark out more trails. I rode this virgin trail three times on cooler days in September, and it is a very nice ride. A local farmer/equestrian was gracious enough to donate five acres, one-quarter mile from where the trail begins. Users are welcome to park or camp in this area, but there is no water or electric at this time. With increased usage, however, the land owner may rectify that.

The plan is for the trail to start at Swan Lake, which will be a five mile segment. From there it will hook up to the bike trail and go all the way to Lake View, which will be roughly 33 miles of trails + the trails through Hazel Brush. Our club plans on clearing more along the bike trail each year.

With help, we will finish it sooner.

Additionally, we are hoping that the trail gets a lot of usage so that the DNR will help keep up the trail. At this time, it is our club that keeps it up and mowed. So please come and check it out with your equine partner and friends! And bring your bush hogs, gloves, and shovels, if you are so inclined!

The trail head and parking area start roughly one-quarter mile north of the intersection of 170th and Hawthorne, or three miles west of Carroll on Highway 30, then north another 2.25 miles. The parking area is on the west side and is marked with two white posts. The trail head starts just north of the parking area across the bridge on the north side of the bike entrance. I erected signs in October to help make the trail head (and the trail) more apparent. The only stipulation is that if a horse messes on one of the bridges it must be cleaned up. Neglecting to do so would be a bad mark against the horse trail riders, possibly leading to cessation of the rights to use it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. My cell is 712-830-7633.

Happy Trails, to all of us!!