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RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY SHARES PROGRESS TOWARD COMPLETING GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL

Nearly $13 million in public and private funding secured to advance Great American segments in four states

WASHINGTON—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) today revealed that nearly $13 million in funding has been secured for Great American Rail-Trail segments. This investment will help to close trail gaps and to improve existing sections of trail along the 3,700-mile route of the Great American Rail-Trail, which currently stands at 52% complete. In addition, RTC indicated that nearly 100 miles of new trail along the route are expected to be completed in 2020.

“Since we revealed the route of the Great American in May, there has been an outpouring of enthusiasm for the project,” said Ryan Chao, president of RTC. “People are excited about the potential of hiking or biking across the country, and communities are excited about the economic opportunity the project represents. We all know that funding is key to completing the trail, and these early investments give us optimism in the funding and trail miles that will continue to grow.”

Since May 2019, local partners have secured the following funding for trail development along the Great American Rail-Trail:

• **Bolivar Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail** (Ohio), receiving $54,375 from the Timken Foundation of Canton to connect the trail to Bolivar
• **Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail SR 800 Extension** (Ohio), receiving $483,000 from the Ohio Department of Transportation to develop trail between Zoarville and Dover
• **North Judson Erie Trail Extension** (Indiana), receiving one of the state’s Next Level Trails grants for $390,750 to construct 2.1 miles of trail between the eastern terminus of the Erie Trail at U 3 and the town of Ora
• **Veterans Memorial Trail** (Indiana), receiving a Next Level Trails grant for $302,956 to construct 0.9 mile of paved multiuse trail from Tower Crossing to the Lake and Porter county line along US 231
• **Erie Lackawanna to Pennsy Greenway** (Indiana), receiving a Next Level Trails grant for $2,910,172 to complete 2.3 miles of trail between Rohrmann Park and Clark Road
• **Iowa River Trail, Steamboat Rock Extension** (Iowa), receiving $375,000 in state grant funding to complete 4.4 miles of paved trail between Steamboat Rock and Eldora
• **Heart of Iowa Nature Trail** (Iowa), receiving $530,000 in state funding and $200,000 in regional funding to pave more than 3 miles of the existing crushed-stone Heart of Iowa Nature Trail
• **High Trestle Trail Extension** (Iowa), receiving $403,175 in state grant funding to complete 1 mile of paved trail between Bouton and Woodward
• **Tekoa Trestle, Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail** (Washington), receiving $1.7 million in the state’s 2019–2021 capital budget to refurbish the trestle over the town of Tekoa and open for trail use
• **Beverly Bridge, Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail** (Washington), receiving $5.1 million in the state’s 2019–2021 capital budget to refurbish the trestle crossing the Columbia River and open for trail use

“The Great American is a bold project that will take years to complete, but the progress this year is good momentum,” said Chao. “This will be the single greatest trail project in the history of the United States, and every community and state along the route is contributing to the massive undertaking.”

The Great American Rail-Trail is a signature project of RTC and the most ambitious in its portfolio of TrailNation™ projects—the organization’s initiative to encourage the rapid replication of regional trail networks across the country. The trail was first envisioned by RTC in the late 1980s, and for decades has been an underpinning of the organization’s strategy to create a nationwide network of public trails. RTC is providing the national leadership and on-the-ground support that is necessary to completing the Great American Rail-Trail—the work to organize people, plans and ideas; trail planning and community engagement; advocacy; and marketing. For more details about the Great American Rail-Trail and to explore the interactive map of the route, visit greatamericanrailtrail.org.

*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.*

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