

STATUS REPORT
DESTINATION STATE PARK
OCTOBER 17, 2001

During recent months, attention has been focused on establishing and maintaining communications with the local steering committee (made up of RLR, Inc., the Chariton Valley RC&D and representatives from the DNR). Meetings have been conducted on a monthly basis, with a goal of obligating portions of the \$1.0 million appropriation toward necessary, high-priority planning and design elements of the destination state park.

Elements currently underway include the following:

Phase I Archaeological Survey---Fieldwork is completed under a contract, which is not to exceed \$101,000, with the Office of the State Archaeologist. Field investigations noted five sites, all of which are avoidable, and none of which appear to necessitate Phase-II survey work. Field investigators wish to return to the site after the switchgrass harvest to determine if any degraded mound sites are apparent. Final report from the OSA is due in October 2001.

Biological Assessment Survey---Fieldwork is underway. A contract was established with Tom Rosburg and Associates to conduct a biological survey of the destination park site. A full growing season survey is required to ascertain the plant species on the site; but it is anticipated that portions of the development site can be "cleared" for development prior to the full year's survey effort. A status report will be received from the team by October 26, 2001. Total cost for this contract is \$51,172.

Wetland Survey---Staff of the DNR and the NRCS are conducting a wetlands inventory/analysis to determine if any wetlands are present on the site.

Design and Engineering Studies---A "Request for Proposals" was published by the DNR in September. A consultant is to be selected by November 26, with a contract for Natural Resource Commission action December 13, 2001. Primary elements of the contract will include: (1) Refinement of the concept master plan; (2) Initial design work and facility plan for sanitary sewer system; (3) design of primary entrance road; (3) design of water and electrical system in conjunction with commitments from the Chariton Valley REC and Rathbun Regional Water Association to provide electrical and water services and facilities. Completion date for road, sanitary sewer and utilities preliminary design contract is May 3, 2002. Level of interest is high among potential contractors, and cost will be determined by standard bidding and election procedures. Also, contact has been initiated to determine if any of the local County Engineers would do the road design.

Cooperative Agreement with the Chariton Valley RC&D---The CVRC&D has managed the destination park land for several years, using it for demonstration of low till and no-till agriculture practices, and more recently as a biomass demonstration project. Given the ideal location, capabilities and commitment of the RC&D staff, an amendment to the 28E agreement for \$150,000 over a 3-year period was approved at the October 13, Natural Resource Commission meeting. Specifically, the RC&D office will lead the process to select a consultant to complete a business and marketing plan for the proposed park. Additionally they will develop a prospectus or a "request for expressions of interest" from private sector providers that will initiate formal dialogue between the State of Iowa and potential private investors and managers.

Road Pond---In addition the Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District has received a federal grant to construct five small impoundments. One will be located on the primary park road just inside the entrance and will provide a water feature, habitat and scenic diversity, water quality benefits for Lake Rathbun, and may serve to mitigate any wetland impacts of construction on the site.

Possible Road Construction---Not all contracts have been bid but we estimate approximately \$300,000 of the \$1.0 million appropriation may be unobligated. The Construction Services Bureau of the DNR estimates construction costs for a crushed rock road with necessary fill and drainage features to be between \$80,000 and \$100,000 per mile. The road as delineated in the concept master plan totals approximately 3.5 miles and is estimated therefore to cost between \$280,000 and \$350,000. In HF742, an appropriation for \$1,000,000 was made for "...costs associated with the planning and design for a premier destination park..." If legislative approval is obtained to expend a portion of the appropriation for road construction, it may be feasible to develop the interim access road into the site during the 2002 construction season.

Allen L. Farris, Interim Division Administrator
Park, Recreation & Preserves Division
October 17, 2001