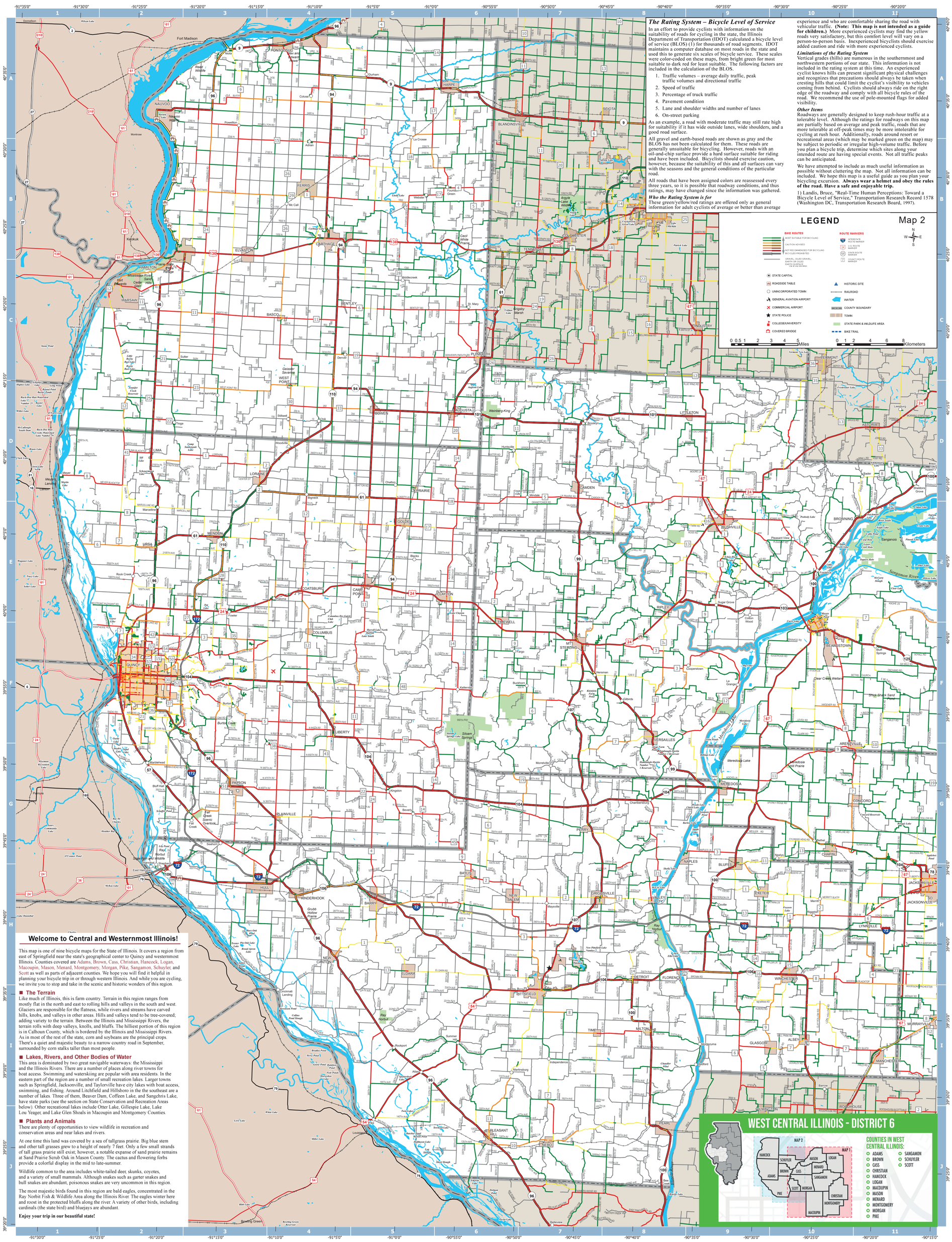


Welcome to Central and Westernmost Illinois!

This map is one of nine bicycle maps for the State of Illinois. It covers a region from east of Springfield near the state's geographical center to Quincy and westernmost Illinois. Counties covered are Adams, Brown, Cass, Christian, Hancock, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, and Scott as well as parts of adjacent counties. We hope you will find it helpful in planning your bicycle trip in or through western Illinois. And while you are cycling, we invite you to stop and take in the scenic and historic wonders of this region.

The Terrain

Like much of Illinois, this is farm country. Terrain in this region ranges from mostly flat in the north and east to rolling hills and valleys in the south and west. Glaciers are responsible for the flatness, while rivers and streams have carved hills, knobs, and valleys in other areas. Hills and valleys tend to be tree-covered; adding variety to the terrain. Between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers, the terrain rolls with deep valleys, knolls, and bluffs. The hilliest portion of this region is in Calhoun County, which is bordered by the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. As in most of the rest of the state, corn and soybeans are the principal crops. There's a quiet and majestic beauty to a narrow country road in September, surrounded by corn stalks taller than most people.

Lakes, Rivers, and Other Bodies of Water

This area is dominated by two great navigable waterways: the Mississippi and the Illinois Rivers. There are a number of places along river towns for boat access. Swimming and waterskiing are popular with area residents. In the eastern part of the region are a number of small recreation lakes. Larger towns such as Springfield, Jacksonville, and Taylorville have city lakes with boat access, swimming, and fishing. Around Litchfield and Hillsboro in the the southeast are a number of lakes. Three of them, Beaver Dam, Coffeen Lake, and Sangchris Lake, have state parks (see the section on State Conservation and Recreation Areas below). Other recreational lakes include Otter Lake, Gillespie Lake, Lake Lou Yeager, and Lake Glen Shoals in Macoupin and Montgomery Counties.

Plants and Animals

There are plenty of opportunities to view wildlife in recreation and conservation areas and near lakes and rivers.

At one time this land was covered by a sea of tallgrass prairie. Big blue stem and other tall grasses grew to a height of nearly 7 feet. Only a few small strands of tall grass prairie still exist, however, a notable expanse of sand prairie remains at Sand Prairie Scrub Oak in Mason County. The cactus and flowering forbs provide a colorful display in the mid to late-summer.

Wildlife common to the area includes white-tailed deer, skunks, coyotes, and a variety of small mammals. Although snakes such as garter snakes and bull snakes are abundant, poisonous snakes are very uncommon in this region.

The most majestic birds found in this region are bald eagles, concentrated in the Ray Norbit Fish & Wildlife Area along the Illinois River. The eagles winter here and roost in the protected bluffs along the river. A variety of other birds, including cardinals (the state bird) and bluejays are abundant.

Enjoy your trip in our beautiful state!

The Rating System – Bicycle Level of Service

In an effort to provide cyclists with information on the suitability of roads for cycling in the state, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) calculated a bicycle level of service (BLOS) (1) for thousands of road segments. IDOT maintains a computer database on most roads in the state and used this to generate six scales of bicycle service. These scales were color-coded on these maps, from bright green for most suitable to dark red for least suitable. The following factors are included in the calculation of the BLOS.

1. Traffic volumes – average daily traffic, peak traffic volumes and directional traffic
2. Speed of traffic
3. Percentage of truck traffic
4. Pavement condition
5. Lane and shoulder widths and number of lanes
6. On-street parking

As an example, a road with moderate traffic may still rate high for suitability if it has wide outside lanes, wide shoulders, and a good road surface.

All gravel and earth-based roads are shown as gray and the BLOS has not been calculated for them. These roads are generally unsuitable for bicycling. However, roads with an oil-and-chip surface provide a hard surface suitable for riding and have been included. Bicyclists should exercise caution, however, because the suitability of this and all surfaces can vary with the seasons and the general conditions of the particular road.

All roads that have been assigned colors are reassessed every three years, so it is possible that roadway conditions, and thus ratings, may have changed since the information was gathered.

Who the Rating System is for

These green/yellow/red ratings are offered only as general information for adult cyclists of average or better than average experience and who are comfortable sharing the road with vehicular traffic. **(Note: This map is not intended as a guide for children.)** More experienced cyclists may find the yellow roads very satisfactory, but this comfort level will vary on a person-to-person basis. Inexperienced bicyclists should exercise added caution and ride with more experienced cyclists.

Limitations of the Rating System

Vertical grades (hills) are numerous in the southernmost and northwestern portions of our state. This information is not included in the rating system at this time. An experienced cyclist knows hills can present significant physical challenges and recognizes that precautions should always be taken when cresting hills that could limit the cyclist's visibility to vehicles coming from behind. Cyclists should always ride on the right edge of the roadway and comply with all bicycle rules of the road. We recommend the use of pole-mounted flags for added visibility.

Other Items

Roadways are generally designed to keep rush-hour traffic at a tolerable level. Although the ratings for roadways on this map are partially based on average and peak traffic, roads that are more tolerable at off-peak times may be more intolerable for cycling at rush hour. Additionally, roads around resort or recreational areas (which may be marked green on the map) may be subject to periodic or irregular high-volume traffic. Before you plan a bicycle trip, determine which sites along your intended route are having special events. Not all traffic peaks can be anticipated.

We have attempted to include as much useful information as possible without cluttering the map. Not all information can be included. We hope this map is a useful guide as you plan your bicycling excursion. **Always wear a helmet and obey the rules of the road. Have a safe and enjoyable trip.**

1) Landis, Bruce, "Real-Time Human Perceptions: Toward a Bicycle Level of Service," Transportation Research Record 1578 (Washington DC, Transportation Research Board, 1997).

Important Addresses and Phone Numbers Emergencies - Dial 911

Amtrak

1-800-USA-RAIL. www.amtrak.com

Bike Advocacy Organizations

National Center for Bicycling & Walking (NCBW)
NCBW is a resident program at Project for Public Spaces, Inc. NCBW was establishing in 1977, as the Bicycle Federation of America, Inc. NCBW's mission is to create bicycle-friendly and walkable communities.
www.bikewalk.org
email: info@bikewalk.org

Active Transportation Alliance, 35 E. Wacker Dr, Suite 1782, Chicago, IL 60601, 312-427-3325. The mission of Active Transportation Alliance is to advocate for walking, bicycling, and public transit to create healthy, sustainable and equitable communities. www.activetrans.org

League of America Bicyclists, 1612 K Street NW, Suite 1102, Washington, DC 20006, 202-822-1333. Mission: To lead the movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. As leaders, our commitment is to listen and learn, define standards and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change. www.bikeleague.org

Ride Illinois, 815 Leicester Rd #314, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007, 630-216-9282. The statewide bike advocacy organization works for bike-friendly roads and trails, for favorable legislation, and to educate cyclists and motorists. www.rideillinois.org

Bus Service

Greyhound, 800-231-2222
www.greyhound.com

Campgrounds, Public

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
One Natural Resource Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, 217-782-6302
www.dnr.illinois.gov
e-mail: dnr.parksadmin@illinois.gov

Department of Natural Resources (State Parks and Recreation Areas) – Office of Land Management

IDNR, One Natural Resource Way Springfield, IL 62702-1271
217-782-6752 e-mail: dnr.parksadmin@illinois.gov

Hiking Opportunities

IDNR, One Natural Resource Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271
217-782-6302
www.dnr.illinois.gov
e-mail: dnr.parksadmin@illinois.gov

Historic Agencies / Organizations – Preservation Services

IDNR, #1 Old State Capital Plaza, Springfield, IL 62702-1507, 217-782-4836
www.dnr.illinois.gov
e-mail: dnr.parksadmin@illinois.gov

Road Conditions (Winter) / Road Construction (Spring / Summer / Fall)

1-800-452-4368
www.gettingaroundillinois.com

Secretary of State (Bicycle Education / Safety)

Illinois Secretary of State, Driver Services Department, Traffic Safety Division, 2701 S. Dirksen Pkwy., Springfield, IL 62723, 217-782-6212
www.cyberdriveillinois.com

State Agencies

IDNR, Office of Public Services,
One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, 217-782-6302
www2.illinois.gov/dnr

Illinois Department of Transportation, 2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy.
Springfield, IL 62764, 217-782-7820
http://idot.illinois.gov

Illinois Historic Preservation Office, #1 Old State Capital Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507, 217-782-4836 www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric

Illinois State Police, 801 South Seventh Street,
P.O. Box 19461, Springfield, IL 62794-9461
https://isp.illinois.gov

Illinois Secretary of State, Driver Services Department, Traffic Safety Division, 2701 S. Dirksen Pkwy
Springfield, IL 62723, 217-782-6212
www.cyberdriveillinois.com

State Police

District 9-Springfield (Cass, Christian, Logan, Mason, Menard, Morgan, Sangamon): 801 South 7th St., Suite 100-M, Springfield, Illinois 62703, (217) 786-6677

District 18-Litchfield (Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, and Montgomery): 102 Illinois Route 16, Litchfield, IL 62056, (217) 324-4900.

District 20-Pittsfield (Adams, Brown, Pike, Schuyler, and Scott):1405 N. Jackson St, Pittsfield, IL 62363, (217) 285-2034

Tourism Bureaus

Illinois Tourism Bureau, (800)-2-CONNECT
www.enjoyillinois.com/

Abraham Lincoln Tourism Bureau of Logan County, 1555 Fifth St., Lincoln, IL 62656, (217) 7328687
https://illinoisroute66.org/ e-mail: info@abe66.com

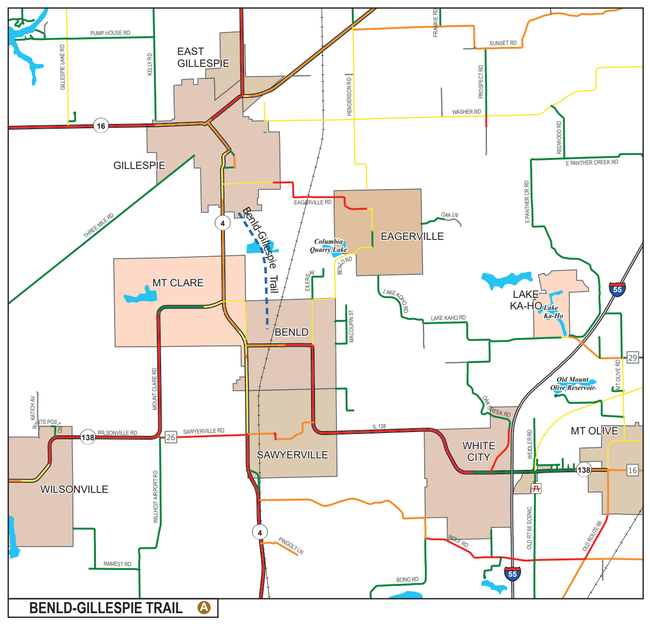
Jacksonville Area CVB, 310 E. State St., Jacksonville, IL 62650, (800) 593-5678. https://jacksonvilleil.org/ e-mail: vistors@jacksonvilleil.org

Quincy CVB, 532 Gardner Expressway, Quincy IL 62301, (800) 978-4748.
https://seequincy.com/ e-mail: info@seequincy.com

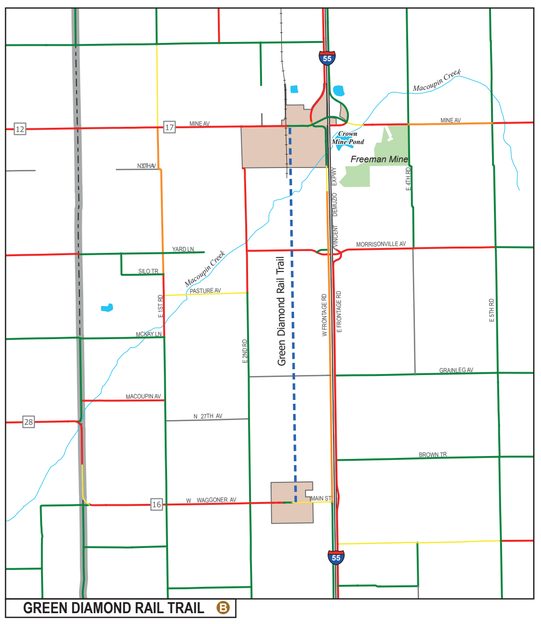
Western Illinois Tourism Development Office,
581 S. Deer Rd., Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 837-7460.

Visit Springfield, 1 S. Old State Capitol Plaza,
Springfield, IL 62701, (800) 545-7300 https://visitspringfieldillinois.com

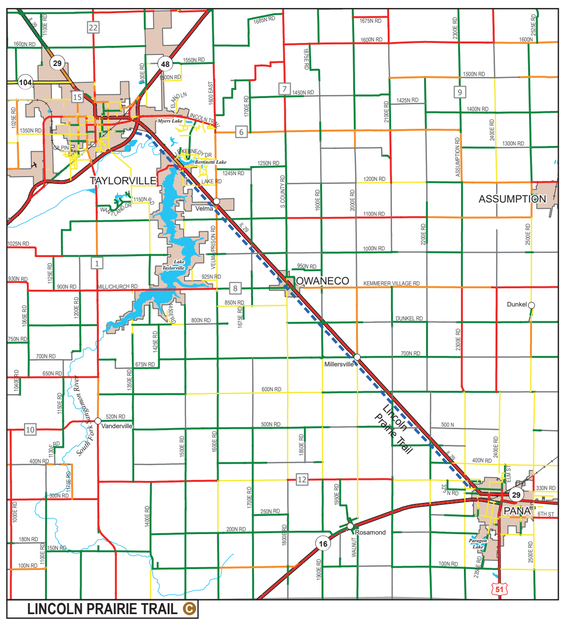
SHARE THE ROAD



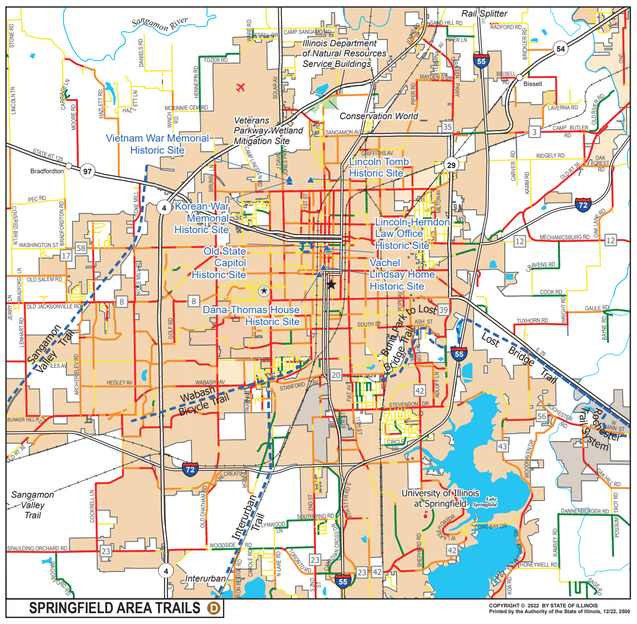
BENLD-GILLESPIE TRAIL (A)



GREEN DIAMOND RAIL TRAIL (B)



LINCOLN PRAIRIE TRAIL (C)



SPRINGFIELD AREA TRAILS (D)

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