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Tom F. Neenan, Executive Director



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April 24, 2006

Vernon A. Williams
Surface Transportation Board
1925 "K" Street
Washington, D. C., 20423

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Iowa Trails Council (ITC) is requesting the granting of a Notice of Interim Trail Use and a Public Use Condition on the above proposed railroad abandonment. We are asking for assignment of a 180 day period in which to negotiate acquisition of this right-of-way with the North Central Railway Association (NCRA). In doing so we are representing the interests of the Hardin County Conservation Board as well as the interests of the Iowa Trails Council.

This 10.54 mile right-of-way is located in Hardin County, Iowa, extending from milepost 201.46, near Ackley to milepost 212.00, near Steamboat Rock

We have no objections to the continuing of railroad service on this line but if this service is to be terminated we believe the right-of-way should be preserved for possible reactivation of rail service by retaining the corridor as a recreational trail. The Conservation Board concurs with us that there is a need for additional recreational facilities in this area, as well as a need to provide more routes for energy efficient modes of transportation. There is, in addition, the opportunity to use this right-of-way for the installation of utility lines that will, in turn, help to preserve more valuable crop land from being used for this purpose.

This particular rail corridor would serve to join together two metropolitan areas and would provide a means of economic assistance to these communities and to the surrounding area. In granting permission for this period of negotiation between the ITC and the NCRA we request that you also specify that no bridges, culverts, trestles, or ballast be removed from the right-of-way during our negotiation time.

The ITC and the Hardin County Conservation Board are willing to assume full responsibility for the management of the land, for the legal liability arising out of the transfer of the property (unless the user is immune from liability) and for the payment of any and all taxes that may be levied or assessed after transfer of title. We acknowledge that the use of this right-of-way as a trail is contingent upon the ITC and the Hardin Conservation Board continuing to meet these financial responsibilities.

It is also agreed that the use of this right-of-way as a trail will be terminated if there is a need, in the future, for reactivation of rail service, as provided by U. S. C. 1247 and CFR 1159.28, Section 8 (d) of the National Trails System Act Amendment of 1983.

Affiliates: American Discovery Trail Society-American Hiking Society-Rails/Trails Conservancy-American Trails



We are forwarding ten copies of this application for STB use as well as ten copies of a map, depicting the location of the right-of-way abandonment being considered.

Your thoughtful consideration in this matter, will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tom F. Neenan