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**REGIONAL WATER TRAILS PROJECT CELEBRATES FIRST COMPLETED ACCESS
POINT IN JOHNSTON**

Area leaders celebrate with a “paddle dipping,” float down the creek

JOHNSTON, Iowa – The City of Johnston and the Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator have celebrated the opening of the first access point for the regional project. The new carry-down access point on Beaver Creek, located on NW 70th Street, just east of NW 86th Street, in Johnston, is the first of the 86 sites of improvement throughout the metro aimed at encouraging engagement with the waterways.

The celebration formally took place on Tuesday, Aug. 20 with an Inaugural Launch and Riverbank Reception event on-site. The event included remarks from project stakeholders, a ceremonial “paddle dipping” at the access point and a float down the creek in canoes and kayaks. The access point will officially open to the public on Friday, Aug. 23.

“Opening this access point is the first step in better connecting the City of Johnston and the entire Central Iowa region to the water,” said Mayor Paula Dierenfeld. “This is an important quality of life amenity for residents and visitors, and we are proud to take a leading role in making Johnston a natural starting point for the regional system.”

The project was made possible due to a generous land donation by Corteva Agriscience. Founded in Johnston Iowa as Pioneer Hi-Bred International in 1926, Corteva has more than 2,000 employees based at the company’s Johnston Global Business Center who are dedicated to improving the lives of those who produce and those who consume.

“Donating land for this access point demonstrates our commitment to the Johnston community and the water trails project, which will enhance the quality of life for our employees, the City of Johnston and all of Central Iowa,” said Judd O’Connor, President of U.S. Commercial Business at Corteva Agriscience. “Advancing this project will help our efforts to continue to attract talented employees.”

The Central Iowa Water Trails project encompasses 150 miles of water trails and 86 sites of improvement throughout the region. Once completed, it will be a regional, national and international destination.

“The water trails project will create a regional network for residents and visitors to enjoy, and it will take a regional effort to make it happen,” said Matt McCoy, Polk County Supervisor and Board Member of the Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator. “I commend the City of Johnston on completing the first piece of this project.”

The project is led by the Capital Crossroads Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator, which is supported by a consortium of regional organizations and a Board of Directors made up of influential business, community and public sector leaders. The project will lead to a significant economic impact for the region. A whitewater venue and adventure park in Downtown Des Moines is conservatively projected to generate \$104.4 million in direct spending and create 202 full-time equivalent jobs in the first five years of opening.

“Each of the 86 pieces of the overall Central Iowa Water Trails project are crucial to make this a regional network that creates jobs and strengthens our economy,” said Dan Houston, Chairman, President and CEO of Principal and Board Chair of the Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator. “This is a project that will improve the quality of life of many, and today’s announcement is one more step to ensuring we make this happen.”

Environmental conservation is a primary goal of the regional project, and steps have been taken to include conservation elements throughout each piece of the overall project. In Johnston, the project will include a bioretention area to enhance water quality efforts. In addition to the conservation element attached to this piece of the water trail project, the City of Johnston has been working hard to improve water quality within the Beaver Creek and Des Moines River watersheds. Since 2012 the City of Johnston has funded almost \$11.5 million in public stormwater projects throughout the city. Since 2016 the city has partnered with private property owners to complete almost \$117,000 of private residential stormwater projects which improve the quality of water in our watersheds.

“Water recreation supports environmental conservation, and this project in Johnston is a good example,” said Kayla Lyon, Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “Connecting people to the water gives them a sense of ownership that will help in ongoing environmental conservation efforts.”

Construction on the access point in Johnston will be completed and open to the public on Friday, Aug. 23.

Learn more about the Central Iowa Water Trails project at centraliowawatertrails.org.

About the City of Johnston

The City of Johnston was incorporated 50 years ago, and has deep roots as one of the earliest settlements in Central Iowa as pioneers made claims to the fertile lands in the valleys of the Des Moines River and Beaver Creek. A host of workforce talent lays within the rapidly growing community of 21,562. Over the past 50 years, we have taken pride in what we have as our city continues to develop, and so do the rare gems like Terra Park within our community. For more information, visit cityofjohnston.com.

About Central Iowa Water Trails

The Central Iowa Water Trails project will connect more than 150 miles of water trails and 86 access sites throughout the region. This multi-year project is led by the Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator. The Incubator is supported by a coalition of regional organizations working together through Capital Crossroads, including Catch Des Moines, the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the Great Outdoors Foundation, and the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. For more information, visit centraliowawatertrails.org.