

## Grand Crossing Trail Audio

The Grand Crossing Trail of the La Crosse River Marsh gets its name from the Green Bay, Winona, and St. Paul Railroad line that once passed through the area and connected with other railroads at Grand Crossing. This section of the marsh is one of the most popular and frequently visited parts of the trail. The marsh surrounding it serves an important role as a natural tool for managing stormwater, flooding, and drainage.

One of the key features of marshes is their ability to act as an automatic backup when rivers flood, storing excess water until water levels recede. This function becomes more important as climate change makes extreme weather events, like floods and heavy rains, more frequent and intense. The City of La Crosse's Climate Action Plan includes strategies and actions that directly support the preservation and restoration of wetlands, like the one along Grand Crossing Trail.

For example, the plan emphasizes the importance of green infrastructure to manage stormwater and protect natural areas from flooding. This includes protecting and restoring wetlands, which play a critical role in reducing flood risks and improving water quality. The plan also focuses on habitat restoration to ensure that wetlands continue to support local wildlife while also providing climate resilience by sequestering carbon.

The City's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance green spaces directly benefit the marshes, helping to buffer against the impacts of climate change and ensuring that spaces like Grand Crossing Trail remain protected and functional for the community.

## **Jim Asfoor Trail Audio**

The Jim Asfoor Bike Trail cuts through a lot of history in lacrosse. Named after Jim Asfoor, a North Sider and prominent cyclist, member of the League of American Wheelmen, and member of the Syrian-Lebanese community. The trail occupies a portion of a rail line that cut through downtown lacrosse.

It stands on the edge of a current large redevelopment site. It also offers a beautiful view of the marsh and the Three Rivers area. As the city has grown, more buildings and roads have replaced some of the wetland areas around the trail.

This has broken up habitats and made it harder for the marsh to manage stormwater, store carbon, and support wildlife. The Lacrosse River Marsh is also an important spot for tourism, with many visitors coming to hike, bike, and see wildlife. This brings in tourism dollars and helps the local economy.

To protect these natural spaces, the City of Climate Action Plan focuses on strategies like improving stormwater management with green infrastructure and restoring wetlands along the trail. The plan also aims to conserve and restore habitats, making sure the marsh stays healthy and continues to support wildlife. By following these actions, lacrosse can protect its outdoor spaces and make sure future generations can enjoy them as well.

## Vietnam Veterans Trail Audio

Veterans Trail is the first named trail out of the collection. La Crosse has many memorials in addition to this one, dedicated to the men and women who represented us and served our country. According to the United States Census Bureau, around 7.2% of La Crosse residents are veterans.

The paved trail begins at the popular spot Riverside Park and twists east following the La Crosse River. The Vietnam Veterans Trail runs through the La in the area. This marsh is home to many animals and helps manage stormwater, prevent flooding, and keep water clean.

But climate change is starting to affect the marsh. More intense storms, higher temperatures, and changing weather patterns are causing more flooding, erosion, and shifts in water levels. This makes it harder for the marsh to do its job of filtering water and protecting against floods, as it could harm the wildlife that rely on it.

As La Crosse grows, development around the marsh is also changing how the water flows through the area, which makes the marsh even more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The City of La Crosse Climate Action Plan has strategies to help with this. The plan focuses on protecting and restoring natural spaces like the marsh to manage stormwater better and reduce flooding.

It also includes actions to restore habitats to make sure the marsh continues to support wildlife. By following the actions of the Climate Action Plan, La Crosse can help make sure the Vietnam Veterans Trail and the marsh stay healthy and resilient, even as the climate changes. Protecting these natural areas is important for the environment and will help the city handle future climate challenges.

## Willow Trail Audio

The Willow Trail in La Crosse is deeply connected to the land, which has been home to the Ho-Chunk and many Indigenous people for longer than many can remember. This land has long been a vital part of their culture and way of life, providing essential resources for their communities. When Nathan Myrick, a New York native, settled in the area in the early 1800s, La Crosse began to grow, and the landscape was altered by the construction of railroads through the marshlands.

Despite these changes, the Willow Trail and surrounding wetlands remain a link to the area's Indigenous history and its natural heritage. Today, the landscape of La Crosse, including the Willow Trail, is a blend of urban development and vital natural spaces like wetlands and forests, which play an important role in managing stormwater, supporting wildlife, and improving the quality of life for residents. However, climate change is causing more intense storms and flooding, impacting the trail and surrounding area.

The Willow Trail experiences regular flooding, especially during the spring, thaw, and heavy rainfall, which often results in submerged parts of the trail, erosion, and trail closures. These floods demonstrate the vulnerability of the trail and wetlands to climate change. Wetlands, like those along the Willow Trail, help mitigate flooding and improve water quality by acting as natural buffers.

The City of La Crosse Climate Action Plan emphasizes preserving these vital ecosystems through strategies like restoring and expanding natural habitats to enhance stormwater management and protect biodiversity. The plan also focuses on increasing access to green spaces, such as the Willow Trail, which boosts community health and resilience to climate change. By protecting these natural areas, La Crosse is working to preserve both its rich history and its environmental resilience for future generations.

## Wood Duck Trail Audio

The rolling hills of the Bluffs in La Crosse, Wisconsin, offer a stunning backdrop throughout the year, with trees and wildlife abundant in every season. La Crosse is home to the Marsh Trails, an urban wetland area that provides a unique ecosystem for a diverse range of species. Over 150 bird species, along with various plants and animals, thrive in the marsh, which serves as an important natural resource for both wildlife and the local community.

Among the trails that wind through this landscape is the Wood Duck Trail, named after the wood duck, a species commonly found in the area. Established as a part of the growing network of trails in the marsh, the Wood Duck Trail and others have since been a part of La Crosse's efforts to preserve its natural spaces since 1976. These trails not only offer recreational opportunities, but they also help protect the marsh's rich biodiversity, providing safe passageways for wildlife and places for people to connect with nature.

The City of La Crosse's Climate Action Plan outlines strategies and actions that align with preserving and enhancing the natural spaces like the marsh and its trails. One key strategy is the expansion of green infrastructure, which includes wetland areas like the marsh that plays a critical role in stormwater management and flood mitigation. The Climate Action Plan emphasizes habitat restoration, ensuring that these areas continue to provide vital services such as carbon sequestration, water filtration, and wildlife habitat.

The plan advocates for increasing access to green spaces for the community, which supports both environmental and public health goals. By preserving areas like the marsh and the Wood Duck Trail, La Crosse is working to build a resilient urban ecosystem that benefits both nature and the people who live there.

## Cottonwood Trail Audio

The Cottonwood Trail is one of Lacrosse's most cherished natural spaces. The trail, surrounded on both sides by the marsh, is named after the many eastern cottonwood trees that line it. One of these trees was once named Wisconsin's largest eastern cottonwood.

The eastern cottonwood trees are not only visually striking, but also play an important ecological role. The marsh and cottonwood trees help filter nutrients and improve water quality by capturing pollutants from the surrounding environment, ensuring cleaner water for wildlife and the community.

The wetlands also help reduce flooding and manage stormwater, which has become even more important in light of climate change. Whether you're a runner, cyclist, or simply looking for a peaceful escape, the Cottonwood Trail offers the perfect retreat, reminding us of the natural beauty, historical significance, and environmental benefits of this unique space.

The City of Lacrosse Climate Action Plan includes strategies and actions that directly support the protection and enhancements of natural spaces like the Cottonwood Trail. One of the main strategies in the plan is to expand and protect green infrastructure, which includes wetlands, forests, and riparian areas.

This aligns with the role of the Cottonwood Trail's marsh in reducing flooding, improving water quality, and supporting biodiversity. The City also focuses on restoring natural habitats to help mitigate climate impacts like flooding and water pollution, ensuring the long-term health of ecosystems like those found along the trail.

Additionally, the Climate Action Plan promotes carbon sequestration through the conservation of forests and wetlands, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By preserving areas like the Cottonwood Trail and the surrounding marsh, Lacrosse is working to increase its resilience to climate change while maintaining the beauty and functionality of these valuable natural resources.