

Long, Winding Road at Trail Symposium

By Jennifer DeWitt Quad City Times, Davenport, IA | Wednesday, October 11, 2006 |



Larry Fisher/QUAD-CITY TIMES Volunteers work to stabilize a trail at Nahant Marsh, Davenport. Alcoa and Alcoa Foundation provided a work crew and donated material to repair the trail as part of a company-wide Alcoa Foundation Month of Service.

As trail enthusiasts trek to the Quad-Cities next week for the 18th National Trails Symposium, they'll have the opportunity to see how community spirit can blaze a trail. Nearly two dozen employees from Alcoa Davenport Works joined forces Tuesday to stabilize a remote stretch of a trail in Nahant Marsh in southwest Davenport. The new 1,000-foot gravel trail, laid through the center of the marsh, not only will create a more permanent path for visitors but also will provide vehicular access deep into the marsh.

Spreading gravel over a soil stabilization product called GeoWeb — a material produced by Alcoa subsidiary Presto Products, the Davenport Works volunteers created a rock bed trail through a section of the marsh that often is under water in the spring.

"This is a missing link," Greg Albansoder, a project manager for the City of Davenport, said of the walking trail that often is impassible by foot or vehicle. "We're trying to connect all the pieces but we can't do that unless we have access."

Albansoder, who also is a member of the Nahant Marsh Technical Committee, said about two miles of trail will loop from the Nahant Environmental Center around the marsh. Most the trail will be dirt or grass, but this area was a perpetual problem because of the moisture, he said.

"You can't just pour rock down or when it gets wet, the rock will just sink into the mud," he said. The GeoWeb product holds the rock in place and helps distribute the weight of the vehicles.

He added that the Nahant committee was looking at similar products when Alcoa offered to assist in the project and provided the GeoWeb.



The work project was conducted as part of a company-wide Alcoa Foundation Month of Service. In addition to providing the work crew, the Riverdale, Iowa, Alcoa plant donated about \$3,000 for materials, Alcoa Foundation provided a \$3,000 Action Grant and Presto Products donated half of the GeoWeb to the project, also a \$3,000 value.

Alcoa spokesman John Riches said the Alcoa Foundation first launched the community service project as a week of service about three years ago at every company location around the world. "This year, it is a month of service, which gives people a little better opportunity to find a project that fits in the month."

Other activities at Davenport Works have included a blood drive, a household hazardous waste collection and participation in Soles for Souls program, in which workers are donating their old safety shoes to be passed on to workers overseas.

The timing of the Nahant project was a plus given that more than 500 trail enthusiasts will be in Davenport next week to attend meetings and workshops as part of the 18th National Trails Symposium.

In addition to the Alcoa workers, the trail project drew assistance from the City of Davenport, Scott County, River Action Inc., Friends of Nahant and Altofer Cat Rental, which had donated equipment last week for the trail preparation work.

NAHANT MARSH

Nahant Marsh is a unique 513-acre urban wetland adjacent to the Mississippi River on Wapello Avenue in southwest Davenport.

Nahant Marsh is one of the last remaining urban wetlands on the Upper Mississippi. It is home to many species of flora and fauna.