concrete solutions

for recreation trails

trails forever

There's a very good reason why so many of Iowa's roadways and trails are paved with concrete. Concrete is proven to last longer and requires less maintenance.

In fact, some 90-year-old concrete pavements in Iowa are still being utilized. No wonder concrete is the first choice for paving a recreation trail.

Concrete trails promise generations of lasting enjoyment.

Concrete enables you to pave a trail that will last more than 30 years without rehabilitation. Also, concrete overlays are an excellent choice to resurface an existing trail. In this era of reduced budgets, concrete-paved trails simply make good sense.

concrete advantages

Long life. The service life of a concrete trail greatly outlasts other surfaces. A rigid surface that resists the ongoing cycle of maintenance and rehabilitation.

High performance. Concrete withstands harsh weather, damage from water, and vegetation. A single dandelion can reshape soft asphalt, but concrete acts as a barrier against wayward weeds.

Low maintenance. A concrete trail continues to stay smooth for years and keeps a stable edge requiring less maintenance. While asphalt requires regular resealing of cracks and edges may slough without a concrete curb and gutter section.

Comfortably safe. Concrete pavements are naturally lighter and more reflective, which helps trail users see better in low-light conditions or at night. Concrete trails stay cooler and absorb less of the sun's heat.

Environmentally sound. The materials which make up concrete are natural Iowa resources, such as: sand, rock, and water. Recycled material is often used in today's concrete. After all, it is the most recycled material on the planet.

Cost efficient. Concrete is extremely cost competitive. Even if concrete's initial cost is more, often it is the same as asphalt or cheaper. Low maintenance requirements make it more cost effective in the long run.

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concrete options

With all of its advantages, concrete is the best option for paving a new recreation trail. It is also the solution for rehabilitating an old trail. There's no need to tear out old asphalt when a concrete overlay can be applied to the existing trail surface. Known as whitetopping, the renewed concrete surface extends the life of your trail and eliminates the need for constant maintenance.

Concrete Specifications

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Statewide Urban Design and Specifications Committee (SUDAS) have established comprehensive specifications for the design and construction of recreation trails. Specifications include the amount of paving material needed for a serviceable trail.

Trail Width	Concrete Thickness	Asphalt Thickness
8 feet	4 inches	5 inches
10 feet	5 inches	6 inches

Concrete outperforms other paving materials for trails in every category, even cost.

You can review DOT specifications at www.iowadot.gov, and SUDAS specifications at www.iowasudas.org.

There are distinct differences between concrete and asphalt paved recreation trails.

Concrete	Asphalt
• Snow, rain, heat have little effect	• Snow, rain, heat degrade surface
• Requires limited maintenance	• Continuous cycle of maintenance
• Lighter surface is cooler, easier to see	• Surface is hot and dark, more difficult to see
• Natural materials	• Petroleum-based
• Defined edge. Resists vegetation	• Edge crumbles. Plants grow through asphalt

concrete resources

We can help, too. The Iowa Concrete Paving Association and Iowa Ready Mixed Concrete Association, also known as the ConcreteState, are non-profit organizations that provide information and expertise to discuss alternatives, review specific projects, and furnish budget estimates for building recreation trails.

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