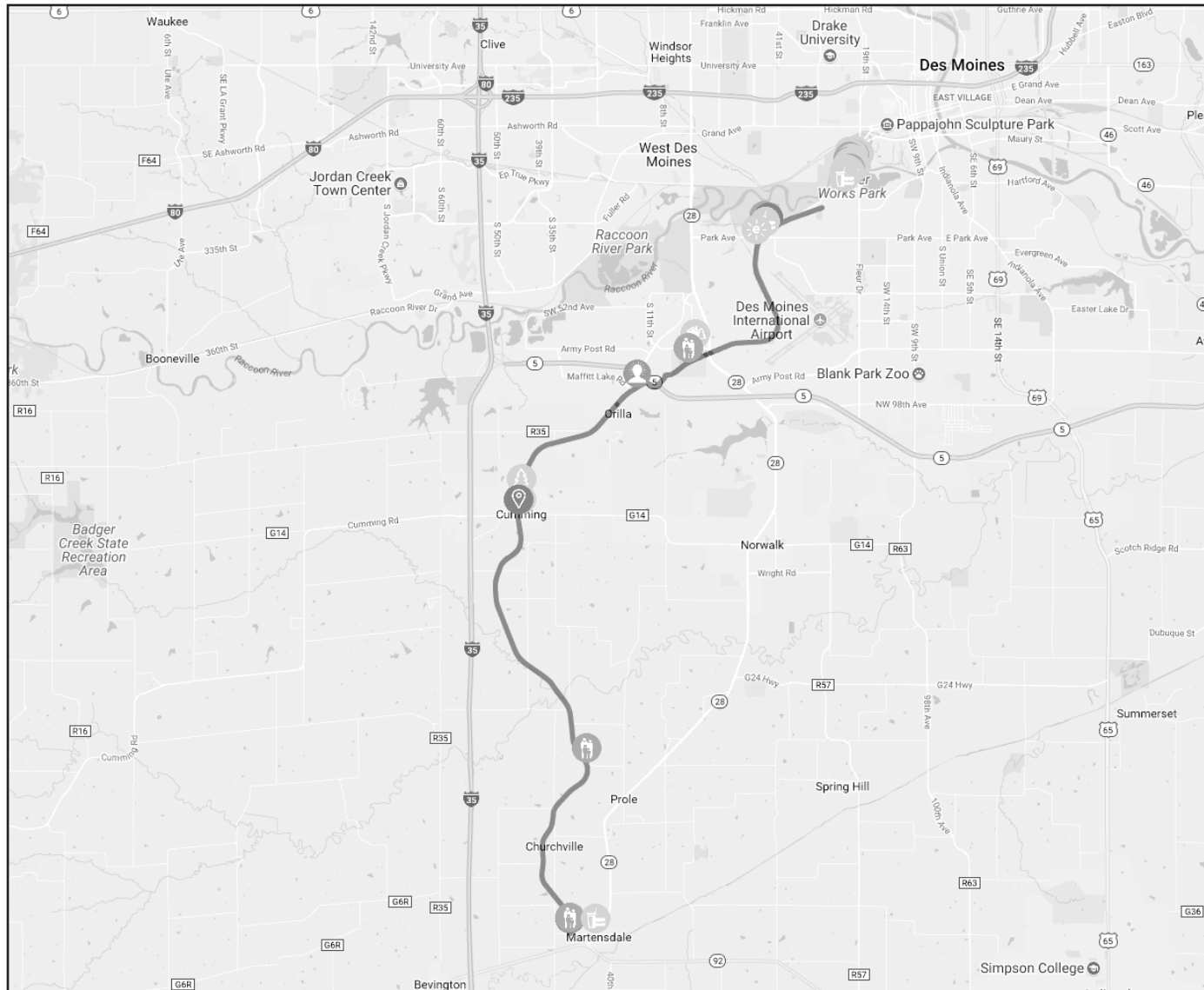


Great Western Trail



MILES: 16.9

TRAIL SURFACE: Asphalt

CITIES: Des Moines, Cumming, Churchville, Martensdale

DIFFICULTY: Easy

TRAIL DESCRIPTION:

The Great Western Trail has a mix of urban and rural scenery. Its northern end is more urban while the rest offers meadows, long tree-lined stretches, reconstructed prairie and all kinds of wildlife. There are also some farm ponds, a river and a few streams running near the trail. This 17-mile recreational trail begins near Water Works Park in Des Moines and ends in the Warren County town of Martensdale. The Great Western Trail opened in 1992, a hundred years after its establishment as a rail line from Des Moines to St. Joseph, Missouri. It is named for the Chicago Great Western Company whose trains operated on this line from 1892 to 1968. The trail is owned and managed by Polk and Warren County Conservation Boards. Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation helped negotiate the purchase of the corridor from the railroad for trail purposes.

TRAIL CONTACT:

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IOWA BY TRAIL

IOWA NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION