

19. Possible Future Road Work (Paving of Fig Avenue)

The increase in projected visitor numbers to Whiterock Conservancy raises important public road usage and safety issues, particularly for the Conservancy's main access roads:

1) Highway 141, on the stretch between Fig Avenue and the main entrance to Coon Rapids, currently has very high numbers of deer-car accidents, and in recent years has experienced a large increase in truck traffic due to the opening and expansion of Tall Corn Ethanol. A planned pick-your-own strawberry business on this stretch, as well as possible new Whiterock facilities near the current Garst Sale Barn, may now increase the potential for accidents even more, as walkers and cyclists cross the road or vehicles slow to enjoy the sights or pull over.

2) Fig Avenue from Highway 141 south to the River, already a very busy (and dusty!) gravel road carrying much of the area's north-south traffic across the river on the Fig Avenue bridge, will now become Whiterock's main north-south artery. This road also has very significant safety issues, the most prominent being the steep and curved hill going down towards the river, and the very high potential for car-horse-pedestrian accidents in front of the Garst River House and horse campgrounds.

We strongly urge the Guthrie County Supervisors and the Iowa Department of Transportation to study these issues and consider the possibility of road modifications including the possible paving of Fig Ave, design of safe road crossings, and a review of area speed limits.

We imagine that within a few years user numbers on Fig Avenue will have increased to the point where they may warrant the paving of this road. At the current time the paving of four miles of Fig Avenue is projected to cost approximately \$1.5 million.