

The Iowa County



March 2020

Water Quality and Quantity in Iowa

Cover photos: Partners and stakeholders tour a pond constructed in the Soap Creek Watershed that helps to reduce downstream flood impacts. Courtesy Iowa Flood Center

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Iowa State Association of Counties

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To promote effective and responsible county government
for the people of Iowa.

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To be the principal, authoritative source of representation,
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Feature - Water Quality and Quantity in Iowa

ISAC 2020 Legislative Priority and Legislative Update

Water Quality and Quantity, Natural Resources, and Outdoor Recreation

As the 2020 session of the Iowa General Assembly has begun anew, addressing the need for adequate, sustainable, and dedicated state financial resources focusing on water quality management issues continues to be an ISAC legislative priority. In addition to water quality, addressing Iowa's water quantity issues has risen as well as we have seen continuous flooding affecting the counties across Iowa. The final piece of this legislative priority is calling for finally funding the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreational Trust which we believe is the best known mechanism to address water concerns and also to promote public health and quality of life by increased opportunities for outdoor recreation.



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To accomplish this ISAC is calling for the following:

1. The passage of a state-wide sales tax increase of at least 3/8 of one cent in support of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreational Trust Fund or I-WILL, to which it is commonly referred.
2. The maintenance of the distribution formula found in Iowa Code Chapter 461, outlined by the Iowa Legislature in support of the 2010 vote by Iowans on the Constitutional Amendment.
3. The passage of legislation that would support and encourage public sector entities such as counties to be directly involved in water mitigation projects that would involve conservation boards, engineers, and supervisors.

Several elements of this priority were addressed when Governor Reynolds introduced her Invest in Iowa Act during her Condition of the State Address in January. Her proposal increases the sales tax by a penny which will fund the Natural Resources and Recreational Trust Fund and makes adjustments to the distribution formula by placing more of an emphasis on water quality improvements. While ideally we would have liked to have seen the distribution formula maintained as outlined in Iowa Code, we feel that with these changes, it can generate the necessary consensus of all stakeholders to hopefully achieve passage later on this session. We commend Governor Reynolds for making this one of her major policy initiatives this year.

REAP

Another important element of the Invest in Iowa Act is the extension of the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program by 30 years. It was set to expire in 2021 and with passage, Iowans can continue to benefit from this critical program that enhances and protects our natural resources in all 99 counties. This is an ISAC legislative objective, and we are pleased that this language was included in this legislation.

Water Quantity Management

Legislation addressing water quantity management issues passed early this session when a supplemental appropriation of \$20 million was approved by the Iowa legislature and signed by the Governor. This funding will go to the flood affected counties of Fremont, Harrison, Louisa, Mills, Monona, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Scott, Shelby, and Woodbury for flood mitigation and recovery efforts. Also, as we move to the point in this legislative session where we address additional appropriations bills, ISAC will continue to advocate that the Iowa Flood Center receives the necessary funding to continue their important work that provides benefits in all parts of the state.

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Public and Environmental Health Benefits of The Trust

Iowans of all ages and abilities enjoy better health and well-being when they are surrounded by nature. Whether it's living near lakes and streams, forests and greenways, or parks and trails, our connectedness to the outdoors is vital to Iowa's public and environmental health. Supported by more than 70% of Iowans, the Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund will enhance Iowa's natural space and allow for public and environmental health improvements for generations to come. As Kevin Costner stated in *Field of Dreams*, "if you build it, he (they) will come."

It is important to note that when the Fund was passed in 2010, 63% of Iowans voted for a constitutional amendment to provide a permanent and protected funding source from a sales tax increase of 3/8th of a cent. Ten years after the vote, the Fund is still empty. As part of the vote was a delineation of where the funds would be placed, which is called the "funding formula." The formula is center stage for the 2020 legislative session as there are efforts to change how the dollars will be allocated.



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Today, nearly one in every five children in Iowa is classified as obese. In addition, chronic conditions like Type 2 Diabetes, early on-set high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, and even some cancers are popping up in our children at younger and younger ages in correlation to their unhealthy weights. But thanks to Iowa's support of the Trust, we can redirect the course of our children and provide a thriving environment that supports their health and well-being.

The preservation and investment to protect Iowa's green spaces, water, and air quality can be keys to improving the health of current and future Iowans.

- Create water quality improvements by adding funding to the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS), wetland restoration efforts, and water protection and enhanced flooding protections.
- A child's risk for obesity can increase by as much as 60% if they live in a neighborhood without parks, sidewalks, and other green space or recreational amenities.
- Children living in neighborhoods with easy access to outdoor recreation and green space have a higher likelihood of being physically active, achieve better grades in school, and require less disciplinary intervention.
- Nebraska reported a \$3 return on investment in direct health cost savings for every \$1 invested into trail infrastructure.
- Numerous studies prove that separation from nature is detrimental to one's physical health and mental well-being.

Two years ago, a strategy was crafted to bring a public health message to the Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (The Fund) conversation. As a goal, we wanted 25% of Iowa's county boards of health to adopt a policy statement in support of the Fund. Once we achieved our goal, we then asked the State Board of Health to pass a similar resolution, which they did during the September 2019 board meeting.

The resolution was then sent to all legislators and the Governor. By leveraging the voice of local boards of health, we have been able to add a strong public health rationale to supporting the new tax. This process can and should be replicated to impact public policy from the local level.

Beyond the traditional economic growth, tourism sales, and conservation benefits the Trust Fund will provide to our state broad public and environmental health impacts that offer long term benefit. As rates of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease continue to rise, we must invest in our environmental health to impact population health. We simply cannot afford to keep doing what we are doing. Wouldn't it be noble if our grandchildren someday sing, "We saved paradise, and put an end to big parking lots."

Feature - Water Quality and Quantity in Iowa

Vibrant Iowa Counties – Facing the Rising Waters

Iowa State Association of Counties has long recognized the importance of natural resources and outdoor recreation investments to local communities. Indeed, ISAC helped push the effort to amend Iowa's Constitution with the addition of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, and more recently has selected funding the Trust as a top priority. The Constitution requires the Trust be funded by the first 3/8-cent of any sales tax increase, and that money be spent exclusively on water quality, wildlife habitat, natural areas, parks, trails, and soil protection. Water quality and related flooding issues will be a big part of the Trust Fund investment, and an examination of flooding causes and effects indicates the need is urgent.

The Altered State

To a large degree, significant flood problems in Iowa are the result of an altered hydrology. Pre-settlement, the Iowa landscape was dominated by prairies and wetlands. Forests were more common along meandering river corridors and some upland bluff areas. Deep-rooted perennial plants provided the organic material, diverse animal life, moisture, and air channels necessary to produce the thick, dark soils that today are the basis for Iowa's agricultural economy. This thick layer of perennial ground cover overlying healthy soils captured rainfall and snowmelt, slowed or stopped surface runoff, and allowed water to slowly percolate through the ground or be retained in wetlands prior to entering creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, and groundwater. Nearly all precipitation was ground-driven and flooding was far less common.



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Today's hydrology is driven through an alternate, surface-driven system. Only about a tenth of one percent of the original prairie cover remains. Most precipitation falls on annual cropland, roads, short-rooted lawns, and pavement or other impermeable surfaces. This water, along with any chemical or particle pollutants, is quickly shed as surface runoff or through near-surface tile systems. It moves as quickly as possible to the nearest storm sewer or tile outlet and then enters creeks, rivers, and lakes. Add to this new hydrology a changing climate with more intense rainfall events and the results are not surprising. Climate scientists predict precipitation intensity to continue increasing to levels 10 to 13% higher by mid-century (2050) and 11 to 20% by the end of

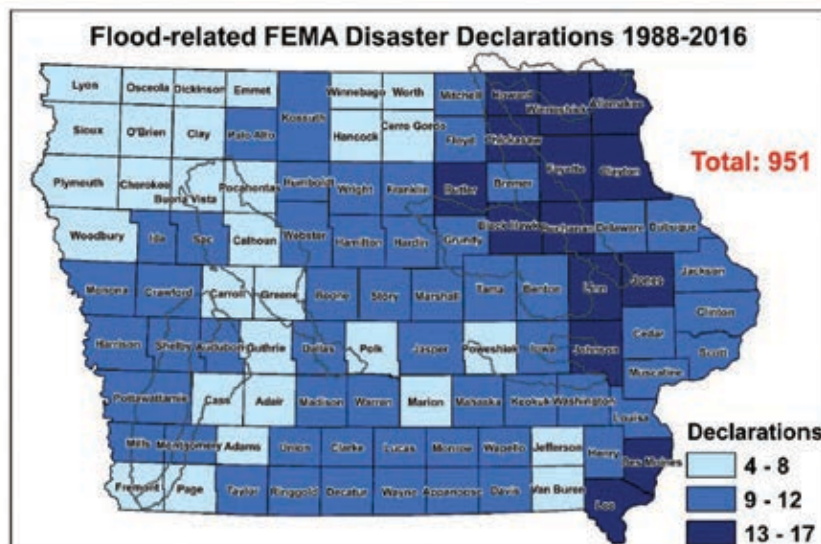
the current century (2100) (Iowa Flood Center). Flooding has become a common occurrence, with huge implications for agriculture, residential areas, businesses, and municipalities.

The Flooded State

The combination of altered hydrology and more intense rainfall events makes Iowa especially prone to flood disasters. From 1988 to 2016, Iowa had 951 federally declared flood disasters, ranking 4th highest in the nation (see graphic from Iowa Flood Center). Nine counties were in the top 15% for the most declared disasters nationwide, and 79

A vision for a more resilient Iowa

The Iowa Watershed Approach



Feature - Water Quality and Quantity in Iowa

counties were in the top 45% for declared disasters. All of this flooding translates into hardship and disrupted lives of Iowans, and financial impacts on communities. Damages to roads and bridges, public buildings, park amenities, water control structures, and other public infrastructure have been costly. Between 1999 and 2016, nearly \$2 billion in public federal assistance went to Iowa municipalities – 7th most in the nation. (Iowa Flood Center).

“Look deep into Nature and then you will understand everything better” – Albert Einstein

A reassuring element of combating flooding and water pollution is that we know how to alleviate it. Nearly all flood prevention and water quality techniques involve mimicking, to some degree, elements of Iowa’s historic hydrology. Federal Conservation Reserve Programs (CRP), and other federal, state, and local programs, are largely efforts to restore areas to perennial cover – whether it be cover crops, prairie, wetlands, or forests – in blocks, buffers, strips, and waterways. Natural system mimicry also can reduce sedimentation of lakes and rivers, and even purify water, so long as the load and types of nutrients and polluting chemicals are not overly detrimental (another side of the water quality equation). Wetlands, pond retentions, and healthy soils provide capacity to store water following extreme rain events. Each parcel of Iowa’s remaining natural prairies, wetlands, and forests under long-term protection continues to provide flood control and water quality benefits.

Although the strategy to “fix” water quantity and quality problems is largely known, the scale of implementation is woefully inadequate. Iowa is a private lands state, with less than three percent of the landscape under public management. The decisions made by private landowners largely determine the extent to which conservation practices are implemented. Federal and state conservation programs are almost entirely voluntary – using limited incentives to help pay for, and to compel landowners to adopt, conservation measures.

Iowa counties, with their amazing system of county conservation boards, have long led the way. Conservation Board staff provide the bulk of conservation education and outreach within their communities. This is critical in a private lands state where individual decisions determine the fate of water quality and quantity, and other natural resources concerns. Counties also have been chief participants in Watershed Management Authorities – cooperative groups largely consisting of municipalities that study, develop plans, and seek to implement projects in a given watershed. County parks and natural areas, although often a mere one percent or so of the landscape, have oversized benefits to water quality and flood control. These are the protected places in which natural hydrology is restored, enhanced, or protected. And, in a state that ranks near-bottom in the amount of public outdoor recreation spaces, these are critical places to the health and quality of life of Iowans, making our communities appealing places for people to live, work, play, and stay.



Natural Playscape at John F. Kennedy Park – Webster County

Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation

So, where does the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund fit into this discussion? Iowa has never provided the natural resources and outdoor recreation investments necessary to the challenges we face. Current federal and state programs, and even the great work of counties, is not enough for the magnitude of the tasks at hand, and funding programs are subject to whims of politics. The Trust Fund, constitutionally protected with its own funding mechanism, will have the capacity to be the game-changer for improved water quality, reduced flood events, and the quality of life of Iowans.

Recently, the Governor included a sales tax increase as part of her Invest in Iowa initiative and stated the importance of the Trust Fund, which would be required to receive funding. Should the Trust be funded, and funds be distributed in a manner similar to the strategy currently in Iowa law, Iowans will see vast improvements across the landscape – on farms, in parks and natural areas, and in revitalized communities. This will be a legacy for Iowans – enduring in the Iowa Constitution for generations to come!

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Iowans...“REAP”ing the Benefits for Three Decades

For three decades Iowans have enjoyed the diverse benefits of the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program. REAP is a state program that provides funding for Iowa’s diverse natural and cultural resources. The program is authorized to receive up to \$20 million dollars annually until 2021 and is funded through gaming receipts and the sale of REAP license plates; however, the appropriation is set by the legislature and actually averages just \$11 million per year. The program is administered by the Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Department of Agricultural and Land Stewardship.

The groundbreaking REAP legislation was signed into law on May 27, 1989 by Governor Terry Brandstad following a two-year study committee recommendation, a unanimous vote in the House, and a 40-6 vote in the Senate. Representatives from over 25 diverse organizations worked with law-makers to create the REAP Formula; a spending formula that has remained virtually unchanged for 30 years, serving as a testament to the important and timeless work by the committee.

The REAP Formula divides the funding among eight programs:

Conservation Education (\$350,000) The first \$350,000 provides vital funding for education and programs, ranging from K-12 school field trips and water education to the Iowa Outdoors on Iowa Public Television. A five-member committee oversees the grant program and evaluates the effectiveness and impact of each project. In the past five years alone, over 93 grants have been awarded, leveraging almost \$3 million dollars in additional funds.

Roadside Vegetation (3%) Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management practices encourage non-traditional management of the public right-of-way using native vegetation to provide safe, attractive, and environmentally-friendly roads.

Historical Resources (5%) This program provides grant funding for individuals, businesses, non-profits, and certified local governments for a variety of historic preservation projects, local libraries, archives, and unique museums across the state.

State Land Management (9%) These funds provide basic infrastructure repairs and replacement in state parks, recreation areas, and wildlife management areas.

City Parks and Open Space (15%) This highly-competitive program provides grant funding for city parks and multi-use recreation projects in three population categories. In 2019, 19 of the 57 applicants received funding. Projects range from improvements to Prairie Creek in Lone Tree to pollinator habitat plantings in Council Bluffs.

Soil and Water Enhancement (20%) Funds are available to private landowners for soil and water conservation practices that protect Iowa’s surface and ground water. Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts can create priority watersheds to protect specific waterbodies.

County Conservation (20%) Funds are available to local county conservation boards on a per county, per capita and competitive grant program for land acquisition, resource protection, capital improvements, park infrastructure, wildlife habitat, and environmental education. In 2019, only 3.5 projects received funding through the \$1,005,276 available in the state grant portion while 18 projects were submitted totaling \$5,771,292 in requests. Recent projects include protecting a 40-acre remnant prairie in Louisa County and interactive exhibits for Madison County’s Conservation Center.



Matt Cosgrove

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State Open Space (28%) This program allows the DNR to acquire and develop land for conservation and recreation purposes. The department uses these funds to partner with federal agencies, county conservation boards and private conservation organizations to purchase land for protection and public use. The DNR also pays over \$1 million annually in property tax on the approximately 380,000 acres of public land. Less than 3% of Iowa's land is available for public use.

The 30-year success of the REAP Program is largely due to public participation and the broad base of benefits that touch all corners of the state. The program not only asks for public input, but requires REAP assemblies to be held across the state to discuss the program and local priorities. At the assemblies, delegates are chosen to represent their communities at the REAP Congress. Each county is also required to have an active REAP Committee and REAP Plan that outlines local conservation and recreation priorities.

“REAP is one of those rare programs where everybody benefits — it’s not just one portion of the state,” said Joe McGovern, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation president. “Continuing the tradition of REAP and providing it full funding is one of the best things the legislature can do to ensure the health and vibrancy of Iowa’s communities.”

In addition to the grassroots local support, the program is also supported by the REAP Alliance, a group of over 30 organizations that promote outdoor recreation, conservation and historic preservation.

As we near the 2021 sunset of the original REAP legislation, the value and need of a broad-based program to fund Iowa's natural resources and outdoor recreation is more evident now than ever before. The 2006 Sustainable Funding Committee realized the timeless value of the REAP Program when they included REAP's funding formula in the proposed funding for Iowa's Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.

In 2020 Iowa faces significant challenges in water quality, rural economic development, public and environmental health, soil conservation, workforce recruitment, and outdoor recreation. It will take broad-based, grassroots programs like REAP, Iowa's Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, the Governor's Invest in Iowa Act, and continued support from all Iowans to create the changes that will set Iowa on a path to success in 2020. For 30 years Iowans have “reaped” the benefits by investing nearly \$400 million in our natural resources, recreation, and cultural heritage...imagine the possibilities in the next 30 years.



Badger Creek Streambank Stabilization – before and after restoration



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A Vision for a more Resilient Iowa

Iowans can be proud of the progress we've made to become more flood-resilient over the last 10 years. After the 2008 floods, Iowa legislators quickly engaged with scientific experts and established the Iowa Flood Center at the University of Iowa. In 2010, Iowa passed legislation to establish watershed management authorities to facilitate collaboration among urban and rural stakeholders. In 2013, after the release of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, our state established the Iowa Nutrient Research Center to support improving the health of our waterways.

These efforts, and many others, helped position Iowa to successfully secure a \$97 million award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to create the Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA), which began in 2016. IWA has intensified water resource management efforts across the state by developing a well-defined, replicable program that aims to reduce flood impacts, improve water quality, and increase community flood resilience. The collaborative partnerships developed through IWA involving state agencies, non-governmental groups, watershed management authorities, and stakeholders have supported the success of this program, which ends in fall 2021.

Despite these efforts, addressing our water resource challenges is becoming more difficult due to the impacts of climate change, extreme weather, and the intensification of agriculture. In 2019, we learned that the nitrate load leaving Iowa had doubled since 2003. To address this issue and other water-related concerns, we as Iowans must strive for greater balance of agricultural, economic, natural, water, and human interests in a manner that will progressively improve our water quality and better manage flood events.

In 2020, we must work together—the Iowa way—to solve the water quantity and quality challenges we face and to develop meaningful, science-based solutions. Like most Iowans, I support the [Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund \(IWILL\)](#), which would create permanent, substantial, and reliable funding to protect natural resources and increase recreation opportunities throughout Iowa. This funding would allow us to accelerate our conservation efforts to make meaningful im-



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provements to address flooding and improve water quality. A decade ago, Iowa voters took to the polls and overwhelmingly passed the Trust Fund. The time is now — I urge our legislators to pass the Trust Fund preserving the original formula this year. Since the Iowa Flood Center was founded 10 years ago, floods have devastated parts of Iowa nearly every year. The spring floods in 2019 reminded us that there is no “perfect storm” causing these events; rather, increased heavy rainfall and associated flooding is our new normal. These floods were yet another reminder of the threats that face our communities, but all too often, these memories recede quickly after the event is over. Last year alone, floods damaged the state of Iowa at the tune of \$2 billion. Floods impacted homes, farms, businesses, and schools in almost every single county. This is not just an Iowa problem — flooding is now the country’s most common and costliest natural disaster.

Iowa’s significant investments in flood response, recovery, preparedness, and mitigation have earned nationwide recognition, particularly from states like Texas and North Carolina. But these efforts cannot be sustained as we continue to experience the increasing severity of storms and flood events. Investing in flood protection is critical, and it pays off. Research has found that every \$1 invested in mitigation saves \$6 in damage recovery. This type of investment is needed across the state, but it will only happen with support from state and federal government — ideally, before the next major flood event occurs.

Additionally, we need sustainable policy changes that reflect the actual and future risks that many people are experiencing. Keep an eye on two legislative proposals that would support community flood resiliency through the creation of the State Flood Mitigation Revolving Loan Fund (S.2192) and the Repeatedly Flooded Communities Preparation Act (S. 2088). These proposals support much needed reforms to the National Flood Insurance Program. Improvements like these would help to reduce flood risk, support flood readiness among Iowans, and prepare communities for the next time floodwaters begin to rise.

Iowans share a profound, deep-rooted sense of justice—a sense of what is right. Certain policies that maximize private corporate wealth have a very public impact on all Iowans. We have a responsibility to stand strong for what is right and just. Together, we can maintain a strong agricultural economy while protecting our water and natural resources, and at the same time creating an environment where people are drawn to live, work, and recreate.

Larry Weber is a professor at the University of Iowa’s College of Engineering, co-founder of the Iowa Flood Center (www.iowafloodcenter.org), and serves as the project lead for the Iowa Watershed Approach (www.iowawatershedapproach.org).

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Water Trails – A strategy of many benefits

Iowa was once a prairie state, covered in plants with water-loving roots 6, 10 even 12 feet deep or more. Back then only about 15% of the rainfall ran off into our rivers and streams. The rest of the rainfall evaporated, nourished those plants, or soaked through that deep soil profile, cleansed and slowed before reaching our waterways. Then, European settlers arrived to farm and live here. As time went by, we paved, plowed, roofed, and drained the land. Now, about two-thirds of the rainfall here rushes into our storm drains, tiles, and runs off of our farmland, turf lawns, and parking lots. Those waters flow at erosion-causing speeds and carry excess nutrients and pollutants.

The challenges to our water quality have left us frustrated, divided over what to do and – perhaps equally sad – we’ve disconnected from our creeks, streams and rivers.

But our waters connect us all. They flow with no awareness of urban, suburban or rural concerns, of state, county, or community boundaries. Yet we pay them little heed except in times of crisis. And, while striving to do better, we have yet to make the needed investments to restore our waters to the status they deserve: as premiere assets for our communities, counties, landowners, and residents across the state.

We can begin to enhance our water quality as we launch a new era in our appreciation of their value. A key strategy to use? Water trails.

We tend to think of water trails as superfluous, as a nicety vs. necessity, but that denies their multiple-benefits. It discounts their ability to unify us as a people working to achieve a meaningful quality of life for every Iowan and to accomplish specific community goals.

You will find water trails at the confluence of:

- Economic development and rural vitality
- Workforce recruitment
- Public health and safety
- Water quality and flood mitigation and
- Affordable recreation for nearly everyone.

In 2011, Charles City opened Iowa’s first whitewater park (a piece of water trail) in the heart of the city. City Administrator Steve Diers landed in Charles City about a year after the park opened. “We’ve seen a changing of attitudes in how we think of the river. We’ve had our fair share of floods and issues here in Charles City. The river was always a nuisance. We had our backs turned to the river and now we’re turning to face it.”



Webster County

And the benefits from this re-connection have been numerous. The riverfront has been a notable plus “from a community marketing perspective,” according to Diers. When larger employers bring people in, they take them to the riverfront as a recruitment tool, he notes.

Water management and cost benefits have followed with Charles City tackling a number of initiatives both in-town (e.g., permeable paving) and outside of town. With grant aid sparked by the riverfront, Charles City reached out to landowners and farm operators to install conservation practices for notable improvements. Charles City’s flooding situation is getting better, according to Diers. The water’s not coming all at once, he says. “If we can continue to improve the flooding situation, we don’t have the negative economic impact. The last [flood] didn’t cost us \$100,000 in damage.”



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Ultimately, water trails have placed Charles City on the map and on the move. And they're not alone. Charles City partners with Elkader and Manchester. They promote their water features supporting economic development, tourism and overall community vibrancy. It's working. "It hasn't been a competitive thing. It's been a benefit for all of us," Diers adds.

Webster County Conservation Board Director Matt Cosgrove tells a similar story about the water trails of Fort Dodge. A partnership with Boone and Hamilton Counties and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) led to a Des Moines River trail stretching through the tri-county region. Two years later, local paddlers raised funds, reached out to landowners and expanded the river trail network to include Lizard Creek. Cosgrove notes it's proved a great example of tourism, but he adds the "workforce piece" of these projects is "huge, especially for the younger people. The young professionals are engaged in land and water social activities. We had trouble recruiting young people from larger cities, but now they can recreate close to home."

Perhaps proof of the importance to workforce development is the ongoing involvement of the area's larger employers. Cosgrove says businesses like Cargill offer to help "provide money for stream bank projects and things like that. Employers definitely see the value in investing in these amenities." Cosgrove notes change in the community is obvious. "We actually see canoes and kayaks on the tops of cars and trucks in significant numbers, where we never used to see them before."

As Fort Dodge prepares to remove two low-head dams for improved safety and access, Cosgrove calls Fort Dodge's future a bright one. He sees people taking advantage of what he calls the "synergies" coming from the river trails. Cosgrove notes he has friends who used to go out of state and pay for an experience they've now come to recognize they can have in their own backyard. "The water trails really encourage people to get back to their roots. This water trail awareness has created a resurgence of people being drawn back to the river and really seeing it as an asset to the community."

By the most recent Iowa numbers (2012 ISU CARD Report per the IDNR), river recreation in Iowa accounts for 18.8 million visits, \$824 million in spending, \$269 million in value added, and more than 6,300 jobs. Those numbers grow as the water trails network expands.

Currently, IDNR has more than 900 miles of water trails with plans in the works for more than 800 additional miles. With thousands of miles of potentially navigable streams and a relatively small cost to develop most water trails, many stakeholders see them as a strategy of substance to raise up communities from border-to-border. And, at the heart of this work, is a commitment to addressing the historic challenges of water quality in the bargain. Nearly every one of the water trails initiatives in place or proposed comes with a path for improving water quality and/or mitigating floods. We cannot return to a prairie state, but with a series of strategies including water trails, we can mimic the impact those old prairies had on waterways. Slower, cleaner water gives us rivers and streams to once again face, embrace, and use to stay connected upstream and down.



Charles City



Charles City

ISAC Brief

Since 2010, ISAC has honored one individual as an ISAC Golden Eagle during the Annual Conference General Session. The ISAC Golden Eagle was created to recognize and honor individuals who have provided extraordinary public service to county government through ISAC and/or NACo.

Golden Eagle Honorees are selected from nominations submitted to the ISAC Golden Eagle Committee, which consists of board and staff members. The committee will then submit its recommendation to the ISAC Board for approval. The ISAC Golden Eagle honoree(s) will be recognized during the 2020 ISAC Annual Conference General Session on August 26.

Those eligible for induction include: current or former elected and appointed county officials; business or civic leaders; ISAC preferred vendors; persons providing assistance to counties as trainers, consultants or advisors; and/or former members of ISAC staff. *Current ISAC board members and staff are not eligible.



Rachel Bennett

ISAC Member Relations Manager
rbennett@iowacounties.org

Honorees will be selected on the basis of their service rendered to county government through ISAC and/or NACo. Such service may include: Leadership in ISAC and ISAC-affiliated boards; service to NACo; service on state or national boards or commissions; service to counties in training, education and development of local leadership; advocacy for counties and good local government; and assistance and support to counties.

Past honorees include:

- 2010 – Jane Halliburton, former Story County Supervisor and ISAC board member
- 2011 – Kim Reynolds, Governor and former Clarke County Treasurer
- 2012 – J. Patrick White, ret. Johnson County Attorney and ISAC Past President
- 2013 – Mike Wentzien, former Supervisors Lobbyist
- 2014 – Richard Heidloff, former Lyon County Treasurer and ISAC Past President
- 2015 – Sue Vande Kamp, former Story County Recorder
- 2016 – Linda Langston, former Linn County Supervisor and NACo Past President
- 2017 – Wayne Clinton, former Story County Supervisor and ISAC board member
- 2018 – Harlan Hansen, former Humboldt County Supervisor and ISAC Past President
- 2019 – Marge Pitts, Clay County Auditor and ISAC Past President



To nominate qualified individuals to be honored as ISAC Golden Eagles, please complete the form that's available on our website, www.iowacounties.org, under the About tab, and return it to: Iowa State Association of Counties, Attn: ISAC Golden Eagle, 5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190, West Des Moines, IA 50266 or rbennett@iowacounties.org.

Please return submissions before May 29, 2020. A golden eagle is not guaranteed to be honored annually. If you have any questions regarding the ISAC Golden Eagle, please contact Rachel Bennett at 515.244.7181 or rbennett@iowacounties.org.

ISAC Golden Eagle Nomination Form

The Iowa State Association of Counties recognizes individuals who have provided extraordinary public service to county government through ISAC and/or NACo as ISAC Golden Eagles.

Individual Nominated:

Position:

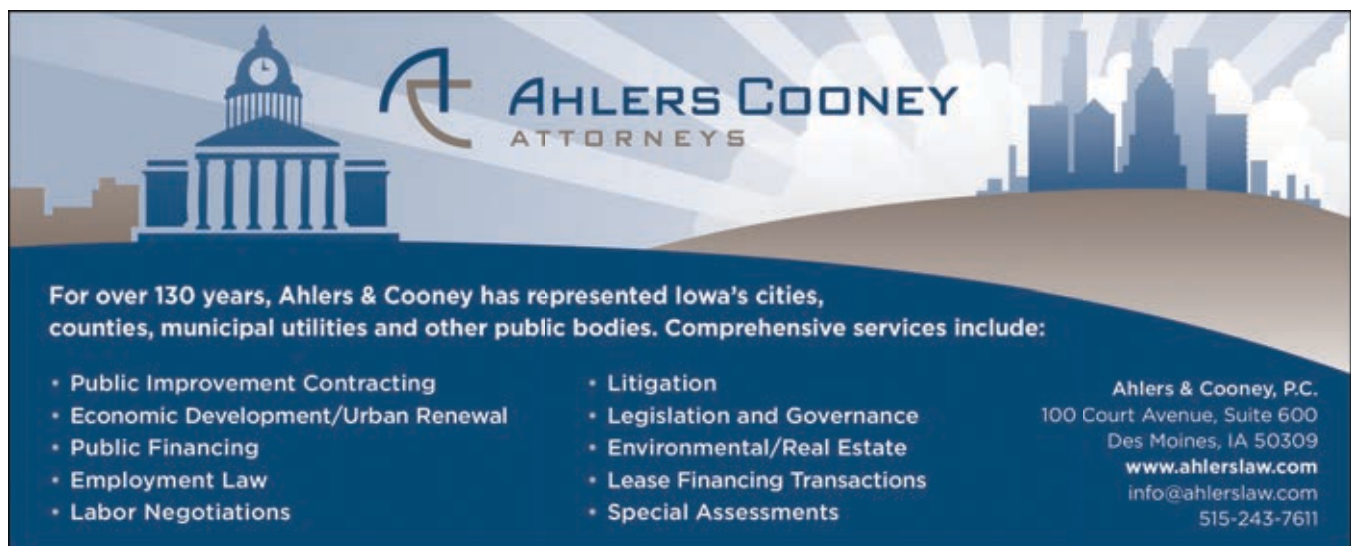
Brief Biography:

In your view, what has this person done to provide extraordinary service to ISAC and/or NACo? Why do you feel this person should be an ISAC Golden Eagle honoree?

Nominated by:

Forward this form to:
Iowa State Association of Counties
Attn: ISAC Golden Eagle
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
West Des Moines, IA 50266

**Please return submission prior to May 29, 2020.*



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Human Resources

Hiring Process 101

One of the worst things an employer or member can do when hiring is to be unprepared and rush through the process. When members focus on speed over quality, sometimes, the result is a poor hire. Unfortunately, every so often, a poor hire is the best-case scenario because speed over quality in hiring can also result in illegal acts and costly mistakes. It is important to focus on being smart and hiring right the first time. The following tips should get you on the right track to a more successful hiring practice.



Lisa Mart

IMWCA Human Resources Specialist
lisamart@iowaleague.org

Job Description The foundation of a good hiring process is the job description. It sets expectations, responsibilities and requirements of the position. A good job description should have a heading, summary, duties/responsibilities, qualifications and physical demands. The most important section is duties/responsibilities. This should provide the duties required for the position and approximation of the time spent on each. The physical demands section is a close second in the level of importance. This section should identify the conditions of the position, including weather, location, hazardous materials, travel and all aspects of physical conditions. A good job description must be up to date and reflect what the job is, not what it should be.

Posting All public employers in Iowa must comply with Veterans' Preference, as stated in Code of Iowa Section 35c.1 and 400.10. Every full-time position must be posted for 10 days, in the same location where meeting agendas and minutes are posted.

Application An application should include an Equal Employment Opportunity statement. There should be a section for the applicant to put their job history, educational and professional designations, professional references and position, at will statement (if applicable) and availability.

Applications for the public sector must comply with Veterans' Preference, as stated in the codes and have a place where the applicant can indicate military service. Applications should not include a Social Security Number, date of birth or graduation dates. Lastly, an application should have an attestation with signature section, where the applicant confirms that the information they provided on the application is true to the best of their knowledge and an adverse action may be taken if the information is found to be untrue.

Interview The purpose of an interview is to identify if the candidate(s) are a good fit for a position. This is done by asking appropriate questions that elicit if the candidate's qualifications meet the requirements of the job. It is very important that you focus on asking the same general questions to all interview candidates.

Do not include any questions that would elicit any information about the applicant that could disclose if the applicant is a member of a protected class. If an applicant brings up potentially discriminatory topics, disregard the information, do not write it on the interview form and redirect the candidate. There are many resources available that provide lawful versus unlawful questions.

Selection/Pending Offer Once the candidate is selected, an offer of employment should be made. This can be verbal, or in an offer letter that is an electronic or hard copy. If the offer is pending a background check or drug test, this should be indicated in the offer.

It is important when dealing with the different rules and regulations of the hiring process to reach out to your county or employment attorney with questions.

Lisa Mart is the Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) human resources specialist. Contact Lisa at (515) 244-7282 or lisamart@iowaleague.org

Summary of Minutes – Wednesday, February 12, 2020

ISAC President Burlin Matthews called the meeting to order and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. President Matthews was sworn in by Clay County Auditor and ISAC Past President Marge Pitts. Marge swore in the ISAC Executive Committee and all ISAC Board members.

The meeting minutes of the January 17, 2020 ISAC Board of Directors and the January 29, 2020 ISAC Executive Committee were approved.

Paul Kruse, PMA Financial Group – marketer for the Iowa Public Agency Investment Trust (IPAIT), gave a history and overview of IPAIT. He discussed the benefits for counties and for ISAC when counties invest in IPAIT.

Katie Cook gave a tutorial and answered questions about the Basecamp software that ISAC uses to share information and communications with the ISAC Board. It is offered to all affiliates free of charge.

Brad Holtan presented income and expenditure highlights from the financial report dated December 31, 2019. He reported that the Iowa County Attorneys Case Management Project (ICACMP) will be adding Karpel as a software option in addition to ProLaw. The financial report was accepted. Brad presented and the Board approved the FY 2019 ISAC 990 for approval.

Rachel Bennett reported that nominations are now being accepted for the 2020 ISAC Golden Eagle. She reviewed the timeline and process for nominations as well as eligibility requirements. More information and an application are on pages 14-15.

Bill Peterson gave an overview of the budget presentation. He reviewed highlights of FY 2020 budget estimates and gave a detailed overview of the FY 2021 proposed budget. Following discussion, the summary of required actions was unanimously recommended to the membership for approval during the ISAC Spring Conference.

- County dues – no change recommended
- ISAC conference registration fees – \$10 increase in spring and annual conference registration. New County Officers School registration increased by \$25.
- Approve 3% increase cost of living adjustment for staff salaries.
- Approve creation of salary adjustment fund of \$36,000.
- Executive Director salary recommended to be \$168,868 according to three-year salary adjustment plan adopted in 2019.

The FY 2021 budget proposal includes:

- Bottom line of \$577,977
- Reserve Fund Balance of \$901,015
- Depreciation Fund Balance of \$175,000
- Building Development Fund of \$250,000

Jamie Cashman and Lucas Beenken gave an update on the ISAC Legislative Top Priorities, Objectives, and other issues of interest to counties. Leadership meetings were held on February 13.

Jacy Ripperger presented the newly developed Friends of the ISAC Education Foundation that will raise money for the ISAC scholarships. The program is set up similar to the ISAC Preferred Vendor program in that it contains annual packages of benefits. This program is open to companies, ISAC affiliates, and individuals. Donations are tax deductible.

Rachel gave an overview of conference activities related to the 2020 NACo Legislative Conference. She also gave an update on Cindy Bobbitt's campaign for NACo 2nd Vice President. Registration will open soon for the NACo Annual Conference being held in Orange County, Florida in July 2020.

Kelsey Sebern reviewed the 2020 ISAC Spring Conference Board Scenario and gave an update on conference registration numbers and hotel room block reservations.

Katie Cook reported that the Scholarship Selection Committee met on February 11 and made selections for ISAC Scholarships that will be awarded during the ISAC Spring Conference General Session in March.

President Matthews presented the 2020 ISAC Board committee appointments, board members shared issues, concerns, ideas, and achievements with other board members, and President Matthews adjourned the meeting.

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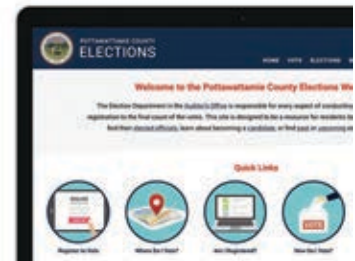


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2020 calendar

March

12-13 ISAC Spring Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice
Credit Union Convention Center, Des
Moines)

April

19-22 ISSDA Civil School
(Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines)
29 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

May

6-8 Treasurers Conference
(Cedar Rapids)

June

24 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser
(Toad Valley Golf Course, Pleasant Hill)

July

8 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)
17-20 NACo Annual Conference
(Orange County, Florida)

August

26-28 ISAC Annual Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

September

13-16 ISSDA Jail School
(Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines)
30-2 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat
(Clay County)

October

4-7 ISAA Assessors Fall School
(Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines)

November

18-19 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

December

2-4 Iowa Engineers Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)
6-9 ISSDA Winter School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC calendar, please contact Kelsey Sebern at ksebern@iowacounties.org.

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Platinum Preferred Vendors

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Northland Securities, Inc.
Schneider Geospatial
Sturgis
Tyler Technologies

Endorsed Gold Preferred Vendors

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Gold Preferred Vendor

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Cott Systems
Delta Dental
Dorsey & Whitney LLP
EagleView
Forecast5 Analytics
InfoTech, Inc.
ISG

ITC Midwest, LLC
Neapolitan Labs
Purple Wave Auction, Inc.
Speer Financial, Inc.
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Wells Fargo
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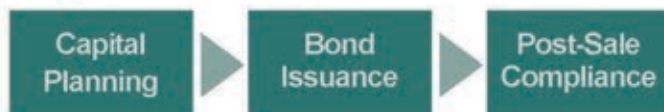


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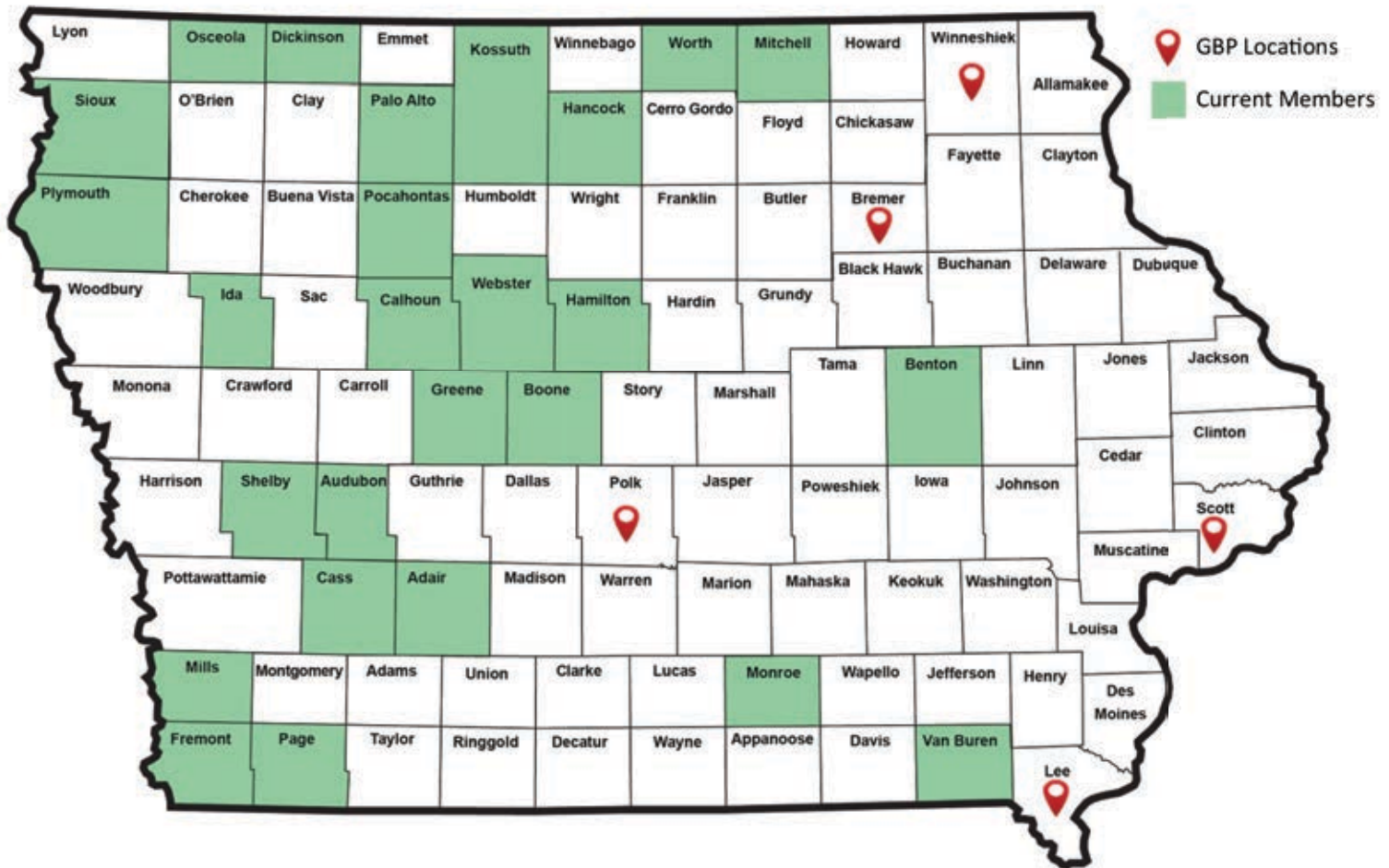
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