

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2021 → 2026 → 2036



Granger, Iowa  
January 2021



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# Table of Contents

<b>Strategic Planning for Polk County Conservation</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Polk County Conservation Vision 2036</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Polk County Conservation: Our Mission</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Polk County Conservation Plan 2021 – 2026</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Polk County Conservation Action Agenda 2021</b>	<b>33</b>

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# **STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION**

# Strategic Planning Model for Polk County Conservation

Value-based principles that describe  
the preferred  
future in 15 years

**VISION**

Destination  
“You Have Arrived”

Strategic goals that focus outcome-  
based objectives and potential actions  
for 5 years

**PLAN**

Map  
“The Right Route”

Focus for one-year – a work program:  
policy agenda for Board, management  
agenda for staff; major projects

**EXECUTION**

Itinerary  
“The Right Direction”

Principles that define the responsibility  
of the Organization and frame the  
primary services – core service  
businesses

**MISSION**

Vehicle  
“The Right Bus”

Personal values that define  
performance standards and  
expectations for employees

**CORE BELIEFS**

Fuel  
“The Right People”

# **POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION VISION 2036**

# *Polk County Conservation Vision 2036*

**POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION 2036**

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**LEADING YOU OUTDOORS!**

# *Polk County Conservation Vision 2036*

## **LEADING YOU OUTDOORS**

### **► Means**

1. Protected natural and environmentally sensitive lands
2. Well-designed, well-built and well-maintained year-round parks and facilities
3. Developed an integrated trail system – hard surface trails, soft surface trails and water trails linked to regional system
4. Expanded outdoor experiences to all
5. Expanded access to our natural areas and waterways for all
6. Expanded access to our services and programs for all
7. Expanded volunteer activities for all
8. Improved water quality in creeks, rivers, ponds and lakes
9. Effective stormwater and flood management in Conservation-owned areas and partnering with other for an effective regional approach
10. Recognized for sustainability practices in our PCC facilities, programs and activities, maximizing use of recycling and renewable resources
11. Expanded awareness and educational programs, natural resources, and heritage

# **POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION: OUR MISSION**



# ***Polk County Conservation: Our Mission***

**The Polk County Conservation Mission is to:**

**Provide Outdoor Recreation**

**Provide Environmental Education**

**Protect Our Natural Heritage**

# *Polk County Conservation: Our Mission*

## **PRINCIPLE 1**

### **PROVIDE OUTDOOR RECREATION**

#### **► Means**

1. Providing access to natural areas for outdoor experiences
2. Developing, building and maintaining a top-quality year-round park system
3. Promoting diversity of trails – water trails, soft surface nature trails, interpretative trails, ski trails, and multi-use paved trail
4. Ensuring clean, safe and healthy our facilities, including inspection and maintenance
5. Expanding public awareness and showcasing of our facilities, programming, parks and future initiatives
6. Coordinating with partners, volunteers and other agencies/communities to enhance outdoor recreation facilities and experiences for all
7. Providing venues for programs, community events and performances

## **PRINCIPLE 2**

### **PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

#### **► Means**

1. Identifying and providing environmental education inclusive to all
2. Developing geographically diverse network of facilities to support and enhance environmental educational programming across Polk County
3. Supporting national and state models of STEM initiative (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) meeting National Science Standards
4. Providing environmental education programs that inform the public on how their decisions impact water quality, natural resources, wildlife, recreation, and public health
5. Using technology to develop virtual environmental programs and educational activities
6. Being recognized as a leader in environmental education – model and “best practices” for others
7. Educating and informing local leaders on natural resource issues to promote sustainable and respectful environmental policies

## **PRINCIPLE 3**

### **PROTECT OUR NATURAL HERITAGE**

#### **► Means**

1. Preserving, maintaining and restoring natural areas within Polk County
2. Developing natural resource management or restoration plans for PCC areas
3. Protecting natural areas through acquisitions
4. Being recognized as a leader in monitoring, managing of, advocating for, and improving water quality
5. Identifying and prioritizing natural resource areas for acquisition
6. Assisting other communities and private entities through technical assistance and guidance
7. Providing parts that are gateways to natural areas and our outdoors while balancing alternative use

# **POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION PLAN 2021 – 2026**

# *Polk County Conservation Goals for 2026*

**TOP-QUALITY REGIONAL PARKS AND FACILITIES FOR ALL**



**PROTECTION OF OUR NATURAL HERITAGE**



**EXPANDED OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**



**EXPANDED ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**



**HIGH-PERFORMING CONSERVATION TEAM**

# Goal 1

## Top-Quality Regional Parks and Facilities for All

### OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate outdoor recreation and natural heritage needs for Polk County and acquire additional land as needed for parks, trails, and greenways
2. Develop and expand park facilities, including camping, picnicking, playgrounds, natural PlayScapes, and other amenities
3. Develop and expand water trails, including public accesses. [in partnership with the Central Iowa Water Trails]
4. Improve and expand diverse trails, including soft surface nature trails, ski trails, interpretive trails, and hard surface trails and linked to regional trails system when possible
5. Secure funding for future park development and for park upgrades
6. Ensure safe, secure, and healthy parks and facilities
7. Have well-designed, well-built and well-maintained parks and park facilities

### VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Access to top-quality parks, natural areas and park facilities
2. Opportunities for diverse experiences
3. Value for public taxes and fees
4. Physical access for all Polk County residents

### **SHORT-TERM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Increasing demands for outdoor facilities and experiences
2. Securing future funding for parks, trails, staffing, and land acquisition following strategic guidelines
3. Balancing utilization and preservation natural areas
4. Developing facilities and parks that are responsive to emerging trends for outdoor recreation and leisure, ensure ADA compliance, safe and secure, and offer equal service to minority and underserved populations.
5. Dealing with aging park amenities and infrastructure needing upgrades or replacement including fleet vehicles, campgrounds, restrooms, shower houses, etc.
6. Passing a new Polk County Water and Land Legacy bond
7. Understanding and responding to COVID-19 impacts, particularly health and safety measures

### **LONG-TERM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. ADA compliance and actions by Conservation
2. Urban sprawl and the environmental impacts
3. Inadequate and access to parking
4. Knowing and mapping all infrastructure
5. Staying current with industry trends and best practices
6. Increasing costs of construction
7. Respecting and balancing existing land uses in property acquisition decisions
8. Importance of long-term and sustainable state and federal natural resources funding

### **POLICY ACTIONS 2021**

1. Conservation Bond Package and Referendum 2021: Direction and Information Top Priority
2. Land Acquisition Policy and Plan: Goals,) Comprehensive Land Inventory, Report with Options and Direction Top Priority
3. Water Trail Development: Direction and Next Steps; Fourmile Community Center Paddling Access [partnership with Central Iowa Water Trails] Top Priority
4. Land Use Management Plan: High Priority
  - a. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
  - b. Browns Woods Forest Preserve

### **MANAGEMENT IN PROGRESS 2021**

1. Donor Plates Program: Implementation
  - a. North Easter Lake Park Bridge
  - b. Jester Park Donor Towers
2. Easter Lake North Shore Improvements Project (\$4.2 million):
  - a. Fundraising Feasibility Study
  - b. Fundraising Campaign: Kick Off

### **MAJOR PROJECTS 2021**

1. Easter Lake Jester Park and Jester Park Trail Signs: Installation
2. Easter Lake Park Trail Mile Markers: Installation
3. Lauridsen Skatepark: Opening
4. Easter Lake Park Improvement Projects
  - a. Volleyball Court Relocation
  - b. Soccer Field Installation
  - c. Beach Improvements/Extension/Docks/Concession
5. Upper Shower House Renovations at Jester Park: Completion
6. Parking Lot Expansion at Jester Park: Completion
7. Sandhill and Engeldinger Marsh: Parking Lot Wood Post with Steel
8. Camp 1 Pad Repair/Replacement Program at Jester Park
9. Cardinal Flower Trail Bridge Replacement at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt: Completion
10. Park Lot: Thomas Mitchell Park at the Pond
11. Flush Toilets at Yellow Banks Park Ballfields: Completion
12. Eagle Roost DOT Mitigation Project: Tree Planting/Seeding
13. Shelters at Yellow Banks Park: Completion
14. Copper Creek Lake Single Track Bike Trail: Plan/Fund Raising
15. Jester Park Equestrian Trail and Expansion: Plan
16. Priest House Renovation: Completion
17. Trestle-to-Trestle Bridge: Bid Completion
18. Yellow Banks Park RV Campground: Hook-Ups and Amenities



**ON THE HORIZON 2022 – 2026**

1. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Bison and Elk Expansion – Fencing: Direction and Funding
2. Jester Park Equestrian Center Expansion/Relocation Feasibility Study: Outcomes, Feasibility Study, Direction and Funding Mechanism
3. Regional Parks District Feasibility Study: Scope, Best Practices, Partners, Report with Options, Direction and Conservation Actions
4. New Campgrounds Project
  - a. Jester Park
  - b. Thomas Mitchell Park
  - c. Easter Lake Park
5. Comprehensive Conservation Facilities Master Plan: Condition Assessment, Maintenance Needs, Report with Findings and Draft Plan, Direction, Funding and Actions
6. Natural Resources Trust Fund: Sales Tax Advocacy (3/8 cents = \$180 million statewide)
7. Park Shelters Upgrade Plan: Outcomes, Report with Options, Direction and Funding

**ON THE HORIZON 2022 – 2026**

8. New Nature Playscapes for Children and Families Development
9. Camping Facilities Upgrade/Expansion: Desired Outcomes, Upgrade Plan, Direction and Funding Mechanism (including hard surfaces, hookups, additional camp sites, etc.)
10. Road, Bridges, and Trails Master Plan: Condition Assessment, Plan Development, Direction and Funding Mechanism (with IDOT)
11. Single Track Bike Trails: Construction
12. Thomas Mitchell Park New Dumping Station: Completion
13. Comprehensive Parks Assessment and Master Plan for the Future

# Goal 2

## Protection of Our Natural Heritage

### OBJECTIVES

1. Preserve, protect and enhance Polk County natural areas and parks
2. Develop and implement plans for restoration of natural areas and parks
3. Improve water quality in rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and wetlands in partnership with other entities.
4. Enhance the communication and information flow of natural resources management to local leaders, community partners, private landowners, and local communities.
5. Preserve and enhance opportunities to understand and appreciate the natural heritage of Iowa and Polk County
6. Enhance stormwater management and flood protection working with partners

### VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Protection of Polk County's natural assets
2. Opportunities to learn about and to experience our natural assets
3. Safe water for outdoor experiences
4. Positive and adaptive response to climate changes
5. Choice during your leisure times
6. Family-oriented activities

### **SHORT-TERM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Understanding and responding to the impacts of climate change – flash flooding, wide-spread flooding and derecho storm events
2. Defining and funding improvements in water quality, natural resources restoration, and staffing to manage acquired lands and facilities.
3. Preserving natural resources including invasive species control, re-introduction of plants and animals into native habitats, and maintaining habitats for endangered species and species of special concern.
4. Expanding use of energy efficiency and alternative energy sources
5. Preserving our shared natural resources while encouraging and supporting public access
6. Expanding community awareness and reaching out to all populations to promote Polk County natural areas, parks, greenways/trails and other amenities

### **LONG-TERM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Stormwater management as a regional effort beyond Polk County boundaries
2. Reaching out to Polk County’s diverse populations
3. Developing and maintaining an accurate, up-to-date data base on natural areas through a GIS-based system
4. Promoting techniques for effectively managing natural areas
5. Revising design and construction standards to include sustainable development
6. Funding and staffing to manage lands and facilities

### **POLICY ACTIONS 2021**

1. GIS System Development: Report with Options, Direction and Funding (Playground, Shelter, Bathrooms, Shower Houses, etc.)
2. Alternative Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency Master Plan: Assessment, Report with Policies and Options, Direction and Actions
3. Jester Park Equestrian Center Composting Facility: Outcomes, Best Practices, Location(s), Report with Options, Direction and Funding

High Priority

### **MANAGEMENT IN PROGRESS 2021**

1. Polk County Conservation Water Quality Monitoring Program Report
2. Cattle and/or Goat Grazing Trial for Woody Control at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt: Assessment Report
3. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Hydrology Study (with Polk County Public Works)

### **MAJOR PROJECTS 2021**

1. Brown’s Woods Stewards Restoration Project
2. Restoration Projects
  - a. Fourmile Creek Greenway Restoration Project (2019 – 2025)
  - b. Dykstra Property
  - c. Crane Meadows
3. Derecho Clean-Up: Completion
4. Priest Ravine Remediation Project: Design
5. Trails End Wildlife Area Mitigation Bank/Fourmile Creek Greenway Restoration Project
6. Skull Pond Renovation
7. 35<sup>th</sup> Street Stormwater Wetlands Project
8. Alternative Energy/Solar Project at Jester Park
9. Easter Lake Park Prairie Plantings Project
10. Fort Des Moines Park Prairie Replanting Project
11. Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Stream Mitigation Project at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Project

### **ON THE HORIZON 2022 – 2026**

1. Water Quality Flood Resiliency Management Techniques: Development and Direction
  - a. Yeader Creek
  - b. Walnut Creek
  - c. Beaver Creek
  - d. Mud/Spring/Camp Creeks
2. Elk/Bison Herd to Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt
3. Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP) in Eagle Roost Area: Restoration and Flood Management of Cropland
4. Fourmile Creek Water Quality Management
5. Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment/Plan: Completion, Report and Direction
6. Citizen Involvement in Natural Areas Restoration Expansion: Development (modeled after Brown’s Woods Stewards)
7. South Skunk River Watershed Mitigation: Outcomes, Report with Options, Direction and Funding in Partner
8. ADA Transition Action Plan: Update
9. Fleet Conversion to Alternative Fuel Policy/Plan: Direction
10. Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring (MSIM) Study: 2<sup>nd</sup> Year
11. Switchgrass Field Restoration Project

# Goal 3

## Expanded Outdoor Experiences and Opportunities for All

### OBJECTIVES

1. Expand water-related experiences – paddle sports, wading and fishing
2. Expand winter time programs and activities
3. Expand awareness and participation with Polk County diverse populations
4. Expand new opportunities for all with equitable access for all – camping, regional trails, playgrounds, Nature PlayScape, Picnicking, etc.
5. Expand Jester Park Equestrian Center: equine mental health psychotherapy programs and recreational opportunities

### VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Opportunities to explore and experience Polk County outdoors
2. Diverse experience for all family generations
3. Support for an active, healthy life style
4. More choice during your leisure time
5. Connected bike trail system
6. Opportunities to camp and picnic in your Polk County “backyard

**SHORT-TERM CHALLENGES  
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Understanding and responding to the impacts of COVID-19
2. Reaching out to all and providing equitable access to our lands and activities
3. Understanding recreational and leisure trends and their impacts on program offerings and experiences
4. Funding activities and experiences, determining who should pay, and how much.
5. Meeting the needs of school districts, home school/youth groups, higher education and general public
6. Expanding community awareness and appreciation of Conservation facilities, programs and activities
7. Mitigating loose dogs on trails

**LONG-TERM CHALLENGES  
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Connecting trails to regional trail system
2. Developing partnerships to expand experiential offerings – programs, activities and opportunities

### **POLICY ACTIONS 2021**

1. Long-Term Regional Water Trail Plan and Development: Governance, Report, Partnerships and Direction [in partnership with Central Iowa Water Trails] Top Priority
2. Trail Connectivity Master Plan: Goals, Role, Report with Options, Direction and Funding (including Hard Surfaces and Soft Surfaces) [in partnership with the Metropolitan Planning Organization] High Priority
3. Conservation Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy: Outcomes, Best Practices, Report with Options, Direction and Actions High Priority

### **MANAGEMENT ACTIONS 2021**

1. Equestrian-Assisted Mental Health/Wellness Program Expansion: Partners, Report with Options, Direction and Actions Top Priority
2. Yellow Banks Park Nature PlayScape for Children and Families Development: Definition, report with Options, Direction and Implementation High Priority



### **MANAGEMENT IN PROGRESS 2021**

1. Horse Leadership Corps Volunteer Initiative:
2. New Curriculum Development: Horsemanship
3. Equestrian Summer Internship Programs: SOP Development
4. Loose Dogs on Trails Mitigation Plan: Signage
5. Des Moines Area Community College Promotion Video for Equestrian Center
6. Visual Brochure on Equestrian Center: Development
7. Outdoor Recreation and Wellness Center Opening 7 Days a Week – Snow Events: Reservation Systems Upgrade
8. Youth Conservation Corps Plan for Expansion: Report

### **MAJOR PROJECTS 2021**

1. Trails End Wildlife Area Mitigation Bank:  
Operational/Management Plan for Selling Credits
2. Commissioned Public Arts Works: Site/Project Selection

### **ON THE HORIZON 2022 – 2026**

1. Host Olympic Qualifying Skateboard Event: Host
2. Winter Activities and Experiences Expansion: Needs/ Opportunities Assessment, Best Practices, Report with Options, Direction, Funding and Implementation
3. Emerging Trends in Recreation and Outdoor Experiences: Best Practices, Report with Options, Direction and Implementation
4. Auto-Tour Trail at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Development: Report, Direction and Implementation
5. Equestrian Trails at Jester Park Equestrian Center: Report, Direction and Implementation
6. Ice Skating Facility (ies) and Programs: Goals, Report with Options, Direction, Funding and Implementation
7. Paddling Access sites Development/Expansion: Report, Direction and Implementation
8. Camp Store; outcomes, best practices, report with options, direction and actions (including inventory, warehouse and online sales)

### **ON THE HORIZON 2022 – 2026**

9. Water Features Master Plan: Outcomes, Scope, Best Practices, Report with Options and Locations, Direction and Funding
10. Environmental Education Indoor Programming: Direction and Funding
  - a. Easter Lake
  - b. Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Long House
11. Outdoor Recreation Programming Expansion: Direction and Funding
12. Comprehensive Trails/Bridge Maintenance Plan: Outcomes, Report with Options, Direction and Funding
  - a. Hard Surfaces
  - b. Soft Surfaces
  - c. Erosion Control
13. Nature Center Displays Refresh
14. Kiosks in Campgrounds: Report
15. Canoe-In Campsites at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt: Location/Funding
16. Hunting Policy and Programs: Goals, Role, Best Practices, Report with Options, Direction and Implementation

# Goal 4

## Expanded Environmental Education

### OBJECTIVES

1. Expand outreach to all populations – greater awareness and access to environmental education programs
2. Expand and diversify environmental education programs and offerings
3. Involve Park Rangers in educational programs – fishing, hunting and other outdoor activities in cooperation with Environmental Education
4. Expand use of technology and virtual programs for environmental education
5. Enhance and expand regional coordination on environmental education through partnerships

### VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Opportunities to discover Polk County outdoors
2. Opportunities to participate in operations and activities
3. Opportunities to better understand our environment
4. Supports personal wellness and health
5. Learning experiences for all

### **SHORT-TERM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Outreach and marketing to all populations
2. Access to environmental education programs – transportation and physical barriers with community partners
3. Funding and resources for environmental education
4. Educating and involving the public on climate change issues through environmental education.
5. Educating and involving the public on water quality issues through environmental education
6. Expanding volunteer opportunities
7. Developing partnerships with community-based organizations
8. Tapping the increasing interest in personal wellness and health
9. Helping residents to understand the environmental impacts of their daily decision and practices
10. Keeping up with technology changes and expectations – staying “fresh”

### **LONG-TERM CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Marketing conservation programs to our community
2. Resistance to climate change and the role of governmental agencies
3. Researching transportation partnership options with Des Moines Area Regional Transit (DART) and non-profit community organizations
4. Attitude: “conservation when convenient”
5. Population growth and increasing demands for programs and activities
6. Succession planning with Environmental Education Division

### **MANAGEMENT ACTIONS 2021**

1. Comprehensive Volunteer Expansion  
Master Plan: Report with Options,  
Direction and Implementation

Top Priority

### **MANAGEMENT IN PROGRESS 2021**

1. COVID-19 Public Engagement
2. 10 Iowa Association of Naturalist Nature in Iowa  
Publication: Editing Complete and Republishing
3. Easter Lake Park Interpretative Signs Master Plan: Plan  
Development
4. Jester Park Artifacts Display Project: Completion
5. Central Iowa Water Trails Interpretation Video Project:  
REAP/CEP Grant

### **MAJOR PROJECTS 2021**

1. Fort Des Moines Arboretum Tree Labels: Installation
2. Raptor Mew: Planning and Construction

### **ON THE HORIZON 2022 – 2026**

1. Environmental Education Program Reboot: Review,  
Needs/Opportunities, Best Practices, Report with  
Options, Direction an Implementation
2. Natural Resources Monitoring Programs: Mechanism and  
Processes

# Goal 5

## High-Performing Conservation Team

### OBJECTIVES

1. Have, develop and retain a top-quality workforce dedicated to serving our Polk County community
2. Deliver services and programs in an efficient, cost-effective manner
3. Have a financially sound and responsible organization
4. Develop alternative funding/revenue sources to support facilities, natural lands, services and programs, including effective partnerships
5. Enhance communication, marketing, social media, and community understanding of Conservation among all residents and partners
6. Have up-to-date technology – hardware and software

### VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Top-quality staff dedicated to serving you
2. Facilities and services responsive to community needs
3. Conservation acting as responsible financial stewards of public resources
4. Easy access to facilities, services and information
5. Value for public tax dollars and fees

**SHORT-TERM CHALLENGES  
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Understanding and responding to the impacts of COVID-19
2. Uncertain future revenues for Polk County affecting budget
3. Building a more professional and collaborative organization – breaking down silos
4. Upgrading and expanding use of technology
5. Documenting our history, practices, and basic information for future Board members and staff
6. Increasing public awareness about Conservation – our Vision, our Mission, our parks and facilities, our services and programs – building a Conservation brand
7. Obtaining feedback and using the feedback and data to continuously improve performance and operations, service delivery and project management
8. Developing meaningful community and private business partnerships to expand resources

**LONG-TERM CHALLENGES  
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Avoiding mission creeping – focusing on Conservation’s true mission
2. More professional Board meetings using technology for agendas and presentations
3. Active management and employee succession planning and onboarding

**POLICY ACTIONS 2021**

- 1. Strategic Plan: Development, Approval, Institutionalization and Performance Metrics Top Priority
- 2. Long-Range Financial Plan/Model: Development and Direction High Priority
- 3. COVID-19 Action Plan: Report and Actions
  - a. Short Term
  - b. Long Term

**MANAGEMENT ACTIONS 2021**

- 1. Technology Master Plan: Goals, Plan Development, Direction and Funding (with Polk County) Top Priority
- 2. Conservation Workforce Diversity Strategy: Outcomes, Best Practices, Report with Options, Direction and Actions Top Priority
- 3. Conservation Services/Staffing/Management Succession and Onboarding/Planning/Program: Goals, Best Practices, Direction and Action High Priority



### **MANAGEMENT IN PROGRESS 2021**

1. Comprehensive Staff Professional Development: Implementation
  - a. Certification
  - b. Partnership Involvement,
  - c. Educational Opportunities,
  - d. Cross-Training Opportunities,
  - e. Succession Opportunity Training
2. FEMA Documentation and Reimbursement: Completion
  - a. 2019
  - b. 2020
3. Financial Processes: Review (Point of Sale, Credit Cards, Fortis, Square Nine, etc.) Need/Option Report
4. Conservation Standard Operating Procedures: Inventory and Review
5. Onboarding Program: Expansion

### **ON THE HORIZON 2022 – 2026**

1. Endowment: Direction, Agreement with Great Outdoors Foundation and Implementation (5-Year Goal – \$1-Million)
2. Non-Profit Community Partnerships: Identification, Report with Options, Direction and Actions
3. Mycountyparks.com: Upgrade/Expansion
4. Construction and Maintenance Division Shop Expansion: Needs Assessment, Report with Options, Direction and Funding
5. Community Outreach Engagement Strategy: Goals, Report with Options, Direction and Actions
6. Conservation Office Space: Needs Assessment, Report with Options, Direction and Funding

# **ACTION AGENDA 2021 POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION**

# ***Policy Agenda 2021 Polk County Conservation***

## **TOP PRIORITY**

**Conservation Bond Package and Referendum 2021**

**Land Acquisition Policy and Plan**

**Water Trail Development**

[Partnership with Central Iowa Water Trails]

**Long-Term Regional Water Trail Plan and Development**

[Partnership with Central Iowa Water Trails]

**Strategic Plan: Development**

## **HIGH PRIORITY**

**Land Use Management Plan:**

**Development and Direction – Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt; Brown’s Woods Forest Preserve**

**GIS System Development**

**Trail Connectivity Master Plan**

[in Partnership with the Metropolitan Planning Organization]

**Conservation Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy**

**Long-Range Financial Plan/Model**

# *Management Agenda 2021 Polk County Conservation*

## **TOP PRIORITY**

**Equestrian-Assisted Mental Health Program Expansion**

**Comprehensive Volunteer Expansion Master Plan**

**Technology Master Plan (with Polk County)**

**Conservation Workforce Diversity Strategy**

## **HIGH PRIORITY**

**Yellow Banks Park Nature PlayScape for Children and Families Development**

**Community Outreach Engagement Strategy**

**Conservation Services/Staffing/ Management Succession and Onboarding Planning/Program**

# *Management in Progress 2021*

## *Polk County Conservation*

Donor Plate Program North Easter Lake Bridge/Jester Donor Towers:  
North Easter Lake Park Bridge; Jester Park Donor Towers

Easter Lake North Shore Improvements Project (\$4.2 Million):  
Fundraising Feasibility Study; Fundraising Campaign: Kick Off

Polk County Conservation Water Quality Monitoring Program Report

Cattle and/or Goat Grazing Trial for Woody Control at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt: Assessment Report

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Hydrology Study (with Polk County Public Works)

Horse Leadership Corps Volunteer Initiative: Policies Handbook: Adoption

New Curriculum Development – Horsemanship

Equestrian Summer Internship Programs: SOP Development

Loose Dogs on Trails Mitigation Plan: Signage

Des Moines Area Community College Promotion Video for Equestrian Center

Visual Brochure on Equestrian Center: Development

Outdoor Recreation and Wellness Center Opening 7 Days a Week – Snow Events:  
Reservation Systems Upgrade

Youth Conservation Corps Plan for Expansion: Report

COVID-19 Public Engagement

10 Iowa Association of Naturalists “Nature in Iowa” Publication: Editing and Republishing

Easter Lake Park Interpretative Signs Master Plan: Plan

Jester Park Artifacts Display Project

Central Iowa Water Trails Interpretation Video Project REAP/CEP Grant

Comprehensive Staff Professional Development:

Implementation – Certification; Partnership Involvement; Educational Opportunities;  
Cross-Training Opportunities; Succession Opportunity Training

FEMA Documentation and Reimbursement: Completion – 2019; 2020

Financial Processes: Review (Point of Sale, Credit Cards, Fortis, Square Nine, etc.) Need/Option Report

Conservation Standard Operating Procedures: Inventory and Review

Onboarding Program: Expansion

# *Major Projects 2021*

## *Polk County Conservation*

Easter Lake Park and Jester Park Trail Signs: Installation

Easter Lake Park Trail Mile Markers: Installation

Lauridsen Skatepark: Opening

Parking Lot Expansion at Jester Park: Completion

Sandhill and Engeldinger Marsh: Parking Lot Wood Post with Steel

Camp 1 Pad Repair/Replacement Program at Jester Park

Easter Lake Park Improvement Projects:

Volleyball Court Relocation; Soccer Field Installation; Beach Improvements/Extension/Docks/Concession

Upper Shower House Renovations at Jester Park: Completion

Cardinal Flower Trail Bridge Replacement at CBG: Completion

Parking Lot: Thomas Mitchell Park at the Pond

Flush Toilets at Yellow Banks Ballfields: Completion

Eagle Roost DOT Mitigation Project: Tree Planting/Seeding

Shelters at Yellow Banks Park: Completion

Copper Creek Lake Single Track Bike Trail: Plan/Fund Raising

Jester Park Equestrian Trail and Expansion: Plan

Priest House Renovation: Completion

Trestle-to-Trestle Bridge: Bid Completion

Yellow Banks Park RV Campground: Hook-Ups and Amenities

Brown's Woods Stewards Restoration Project

Restoration Projects:

Fourmile Creek Greenway Restoration Project (2019 – 2025); Dykstra Property; Crane Meadows

Derecho Clean-Up: Completion

Priest Ravine Remediation Project: Design

Trails End Wildlife Area Mitigation Bank/Fourmile Creek Greenway Restoration Project

Skull Pond Renovation

35<sup>th</sup> Street Stormwater Wetlands Project

Alternative Energy/Solar Project at Jester Park

Easter Lake Park Prairie Plantings Project

Fort Des Moines Park Prairie Replanting Project

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship –Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Stream Mitigation Project at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Project

Trails End Wildlife Area Mitigation Bank: Operational/Management Plan for Selling Credits



Commissioned Public Arts Works: Site/Project Selection  
Fort Des Moines Arboretum Tree Labels: Installation  
Raptor Mew: Planting and Construction