

investing in outdoor recreation



protects iowa's natural resources



Photo: Easter Lake is now one of the cleanest lakes in Iowa following a complete renovation of the watershed. This outdoor recreation hub on the south side of Des Moines encourages visitors to paddle, swim, fish, and traverse the 4-mile trail that circles the lake.

This November Polk County voters will have an opportunity to vote on clean water, protected wildlife habitat, and providing everyone in Polk County with the opportunity to experience and enjoy our natural areas and parks. Polk County's Water and Land Legacy, a \$65 million bond, will be on the ballot to fund land conservation by the Polk County Conservation Board to protect drinking water sources, protect the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams, including the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, protect wildlife habitat and natural areas, and provide more outdoor recreational opportunities for all Polk County residents. If approved by the voters, it would cost the average homeowner in Polk County \$11 per year.

Polk County's land, water and wildlife are our natural heritage and we have stewardship responsibility to protect and preserve them. Polk County's Water and Land Legacy will help save Polk County's natural areas, clean water and wildlife so future generations can enjoy them the same way we do.

The referendum requires that funds can be used solely for the purpose stated in the referendum and cannot be used for any other purpose. Expenditures will be fully disclosed to the public and annually audited to assure that funds are used wisely and public benefits are maximized. As with current funds made available to the Conservation Board, these funds will be leveraged with other communities and local agencies, continuing partnerships to enhance and protect the natural environment.

WHAT YOU COULD SEE 20 YEARS FROM NOW...

- Improved water quality in our lakes, ponds, and streams
- Abundant wildlife to view and enjoy
- Natural floodwater storage to help prevent flooding
- Improved and revitalized parks
- Nature education opportunities for all ages and abilities
- Active and healthy youth and adults
- Adequate natural areas for future generations
- Cleaner drinking water for your children and grandchildren



Top Photo: Access by all to natural areas is a priority. These creek stairs at Thomas Mitchell Park invite park users into the water to learn and explore.

Bottom Photo: These eager Toddler Tales participants are ready to catch and tag monarch butterflies alongside a Naturalist at the Jester Park Nature Center.

Bond Referendum Q & A's

How much will this cost?

The average homeowner would pay \$11 per year. 91 cents a month is a very small price to pay to protect our drinking water sources, the water quality of our rivers, lakes, and streams, and protect wildlife habitat.

How many years will I pay this increased property tax?

The proposed bonding would allow for repayment of the bonds in 20 years or less.

What types of projects will be funded?

The majority of the funds will go towards projects that help improve water quality, protect natural areas, enhance wildlife habitat, improve parks, complete trail connections, and provide environmental education opportunities for children and adults. Projects will be evaluated by the Polk County Conservation Board.

How will the Iowa Confluence Water Trails (ICON) project benefit from this funding?

Of the \$65 million dollars, \$15 million will be earmarked for water trails, providing more outdoor recreational opportunities and improving public access to and the safety of rivers and creeks for floating, boating, and fishing in Polk County.

Will the funds be able to be used for other purposes?

No, bonding rules require that funds only be used for the purposes authorized in the measure which include improvements and land acquisition to protect water quality, conservation of natural areas, and improving parks. The

funds would not be available for salaries or annual operations and maintenance expenses.

Will I see improvements in my community?

The proposed improvements to the county park and trail systems can be accessed by all communities within Polk County. The protection and enhancements of the rivers, lakes and streams within Polk County will benefit all communities and users of these resources.

Who receives and implements the funding?

Polk County will issue the bonds and make the funds available to the Polk County Conservation Board for the proposed purposes. The Polk County Conservation Board will be charged with evaluating and selecting projects and spending the funds from the bonds.

How will they be held accountable?

All expenditures will be subject to full public disclosure and an annual independent audit. Proposed and completed projects will be available to the public on the Conservation Board's website and included as part of their annual report. 💧