

Polk County's Water and Land Legacy Bond

The Polk County Conservation Board has passed a resolution asking the Board of Supervisors to refer a bond referendum to the November 6th, 2012, ballot in the amount of \$50 million for the purposes of funding park and trail improvements, land acquisition and conservation measures including lakes, rivers and stream improvements within Polk County. If voters pass this measure, it would cost the average household in Polk County approximately \$9 per year if all bonds were issued immediately based on current rates.

The growth of Polk County demands a need for parks, trails, and natural areas as identified in The Tomorrow Plan, Capitol Crossroads, and many other local and regional planning efforts. A \$50 million bond referendum spread out over 20 years would fund acquisitions to protect sensitive areas, connect greenways, buffer parks, improve water quality and reduce flooding in Polk County. It would also enhance accessible outdoor recreation, conservation education, and complete trail connections that would connect communities and encourage healthy lifestyles.

The use of these funds will be executed and guided by existing master plans and capital improvement plans of the Polk County Conservation Board. Expenditures will be open to the public and 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.

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What you could see 20 years from now...

- Clean drinking water for your children and grandchildren
 - Improved water quality in our lakes, ponds, and streams
 - Abundant wildlife to view and enjoy
 - Connected communities by means of trails and greenways
 - Revitalized parks and amenities
 - Outdoor recreation and education opportunities for all ages and abilities
 - Active and healthy youth and adults
 - Adequate green space for future generations
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Bond Referendum Q & As

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How much will this cost me/my family each year?

If all of the \$50 million in bonds were issued next year it is estimated that the cost for an individual or household living within a \$100,000 house would be approximately \$9 per year or 75 cents per month based on current bond rates. Bonds will only be issued periodically as needed to complete projects which will result in a reduced cost to property owners. The cost will be reflected in an increase to the county property tax levy.

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. If the bonds are paid off prior to the 20 years the increase in property tax would end.



Water quality improvement

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 County Conservation Board and will be guided by existing comprehensive plans and park master plans that have received public feedback and support.

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, improving facilities for recreation and constructing trails. 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 will serve most 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.



photo by Lee Navin

Wildlife habitat protection

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 public review. Proposed and completed projects will be available to the public on the Conservation Board's website, at public meetings, and included as part of their annual report.



Outdoor recreation and education opportunities