

## Out of the Gate . . .

Polk County's Water and Land Legacy has become a reality. Thanks to the many volunteers across the county who gave countless hours to help all understand the many benefits of investing in our water, land, habitat, parks, and trails. Rarely does any effort receive the level of support we have all enjoyed for this initiative – 72%. The residents of Polk County have demonstrated unmatched commitment to natural resources in Iowa. Let us all be grateful!

It is now time to launch this effort – to put real projects on the ground. We do not have the capacity in place to issue all the bonds at once – that would be overwhelming to accomplish. Polk County Conservation Board has put together an initial set of projects that they will request the Board of Supervisors issue bonds to fund.

Inside this pamphlet you will see the initial proposed projects. These projects have been selected to go early in this overall effort because they already have in place:

- Thorough planning efforts – these projects are poised to launch within the first 1-2 years
- Identified partners and resources to leverage beyond the bonds
- Opportunities to increase revenues and efficiencies
- Ability to meet design and permitting requirements

We recognize that the initial set of projects does not reflect the overall target percentage goals associated with each bond category which are Lake, River and Stream Improvements; Land, Water and Habitat Protection Projects; Trail Improvements; and Park Improvements (more details found within this pamphlet). The water protection, habitat, and land acquisition projects require more partners, greater planning (in part due to the partners and often the need to locate willing sellers) and they have a much longer permitting timeline. Therefore, those projects will simply take longer to implement – but as we execute these initial projects, work will continue on behalf of those projects as well – increasing the number of water and habitat protection/improvement projects included in the next round of projects.



## Land, Water and Habitat Protection Projects

Sensitive natural areas exist in the Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Four Mile Creek, Beaver Creek, Camp Creek and Raccoon River Corridors. Conservation staff will work with partners and landowners to acquire priority properties or easements to support restoring these areas to functional wetlands, prairies and woodlands that will benefit wildlife, flood control, water quality and outdoor recreation.



Recently completed master plans for each park have identified potential areas for acquisition to provide buffer areas adjacent to the parks, protect natural areas, or to support planned park improvements. These additions are supportive of long range visions for each of our areas as usage increases and surrounding development continues to impact the overall quality of our areas.

## Lake, River, and Stream Improvement Projects

Initial water quality improvement projects will take place at Thomas Mitchell Park, Fort Des Moines Park, Easter Lake Park, and the Four Mile Creek Greenbelt.



Camp Creek stream bank armoring at Thomas Mitchell Park involves restoration work in approximately 14 areas. This project is designed to stabilize the stream bed and collapsing banks along Camp Creek as it flows through the park resulting in improved water quality.

Several silt basins will be constructed on each of the arms of Fort Des Moines pond to slow water flow and retain sediment before it enters the pond. Some portions of the eroded shoreline will be pulled back and rock along the water's edge to prevent wave erosion.

Planned restoration measures at Easter Lake include stream bank stabilization, storm water management, in-lake sediment detention basins, dredging existing storm water detention basins and portions of the lake, fish population renovation and extensive public education. This project also involves shoreline restoration, fish habitat improvement, invasive species control and improved public access.

A series of stream bank stabilization projects within the existing Four Mile Creek Greenbelt will reduce the erosion, improve water quality, and protect existing wildlife habitat and infrastructure within the Greenbelt.

## Park Improvements

More than 1.5 million visitors explore Polk County parks and trails annually. Located in the State's most populated county, the demands placed on these facilities are immense. Not only do improvements need to be made to existing facilities, but new facilities need to be constructed to satisfy the needs and wants of our growing population. Park master plans have been developed for the larger parks. Improvements within the plans have been prioritized and some initial projects to be completed include an outdoor classroom at Fort Des Moines Park, an accessible trail, cabins, and electric campground upgrades at Jester Park, nature trail expansion and trailhead improvements at Brown's Woods, a wildlife overlook and waterfowl hunting marsh improvements at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, and an accessible trail and fishing piers at Thomas Mitchell Park.



These park improvements will provide more outdoor recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities which will improve the overall health of our community. They will also support enhanced environmental education efforts through improved access and interpretive programming opportunities.

## Trail Improvements

Three significant upcoming trail projects will soon provide local and regional community connections and safe outdoor recreation trails that encourage healthy lifestyles. Constructing the last 2.5 mile segment of the Gay Lea Wilson Trail will complete the connection between Des Moines and Ankeny. The Gay Lea Wilson Trail is classified as a priority one (statewide significant) trail within the comprehensive multi agency Central Iowa Trails Plan.



Another trail of regional importance is the Chichaqua Valley Trail Connector which will extend from the city limits of Bondurant west through Mally's Park to just south of I-80. This 7.5 mile connection will link Bondurant and Jasper County via the Chichaqua Valley Trail to Des Moines and Ankeny via the Gay Lea Wilson Trail.

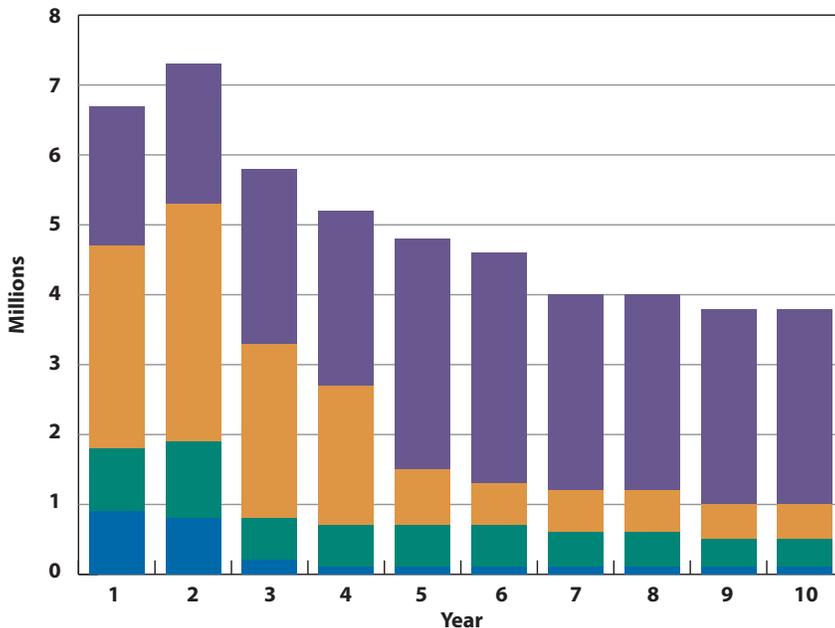
A significant local trail will begin to take shape on the southeast side of Des Moines in Easter Lake Park. The 5 mile Easter Lake Trail will wrap around Easter Lake and connect through to the eastern portion of Ewing Park. This scenic trail will provide safe outdoor recreation benefits and serve as an important connection to downtown Des Moines and Carlisle in the future.

## Planning and Design

Key elements to successful project implementation are planning and design. Quality planning and design work results in more accurate timelines, budget projections, and better executed projects. Public involvement has helped shape past planning efforts and master plan recommendations. We look forward to involving our partner agencies and the public in future planning efforts.



Projected PCWLL Annual Expenditures

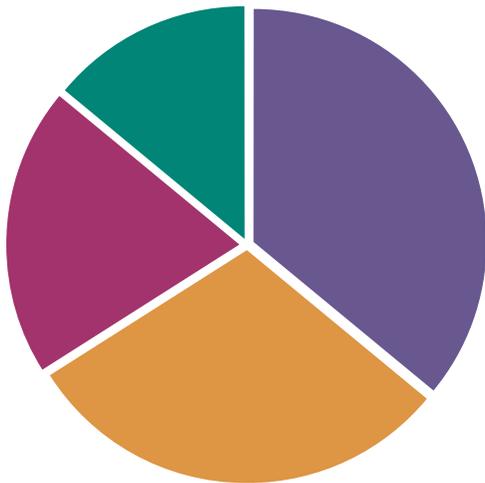


**Land & Water** (target \$28 million)  
**Park Improvements** (target \$15 million)  
**Trails Improvements** (target \$7 million)  
**Planning and Design**

The graph above illustrates projected expenditures associated with the outlined bond referendum funding areas for the next 10 years. Funding for planning and design work, park, and trail improvements is higher during the initial years of the bond as a result of past planning efforts, identified partners, and available resources. Funding for these types of projects will decrease significantly after the initial years of the bond and give way to increased funding for land and water improvement and protection projects which require more partners and greater planning. We are committed to fulfilling targeted expenditures for each funding area represented by Polk County Water and Land Legacy.

# Polk County Water and Land Legacy Project Funding Strategy

## Bond Referendum Funding Areas



**Land, Water and Habitat Protection** (\$18 million)

**Park Improvements** (\$15 million)

**Lake, River and Stream Improvements** (\$10 million)

**Trail Improvements** (\$7 million)

### Land, Water and Habitat Protection

These projects protect sensitive natural areas and plant and animal communities, provide buffer areas for rivers and streams, prevent further habitat fragmentation of important areas and improve access to natural landscapes by the public. Additionally, these projects help address the needs for increased public open space in response to the projected growth within the County. Projects will be guided by park master plans and the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan with input from advisory councils, conservation agencies and wildlife organizations.

### Park Improvements

These projects add or improve existing park facilities to enhance the recreation and education opportunities of current and future park users. Projects promote encouraging families to get outdoors, improve the public's health and support environmental education for adults and children. Projects will be guided by park master plans and be responsive to recent surveys highlighting the public's desire for outdoor recreation and education.

### Lake, River and Stream Protection

These projects protect critical functions related to water and soil resources. Projects will include bank and grade stabilizations, sediment basins, ditch checks, impoundments, and dredging. Watershed improvement plans and individual park plans will guide projects in consultation with natural resource conservation agencies including the Iowa DNR, Natural Resources and Conservation Service and the Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District.

### Trail Improvements

These projects involve completing the regional trail connections between communities and those trail projects associated with parks. The projects are guided by the Central Iowa Trails Plan and park master plans in consultation with regional trails organizations.