

**Loess Hills Development and Conservation Authority**

712 S. Hwy. 6 & 59  
Oakland, Iowa 51560-0189  
Phone (712) 482-3029  
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December 14, 2020

Holly Lyons, Division Director  
Legislative Fiscal Services  
1007 E Grand Avenue, Ste G01  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Ms. Lyons,

This report is being submitted pursuant to Iowa Code Section 161D.8.

The Loess Hills Development & Conservation Authority passes state funds appropriated from the Environment First and General Funds to the Hungry Canyons Alliance and the Loess Hills Alliance. Copies of their reports are enclosed for your review.

The Hungry Canyons Alliance is concerned with stream stabilization projects in 19 western Iowa counties. Stream stabilization projects protect bridges and other infrastructure including roadways, utilities and pipelines. The focus of the Loess Hills Alliance is to protect special natural and cultural resources in the seven counties of deep loess bordering the Missouri River while ensuring the economic viability and private property rights of the region.

If you need further information, please contact myself or Michelle Wodtke Franks at Golden Hills RC&D, 712-482-3029 or [michelle@goldenhillsrcd.org](mailto:michelle@goldenhillsrcd.org).

Sincerely,

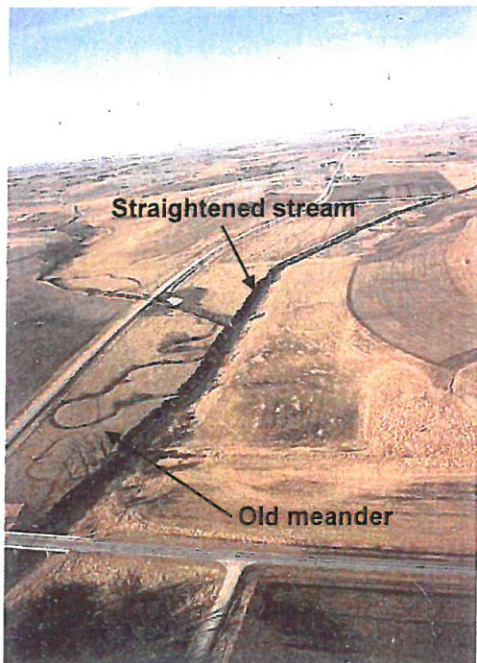
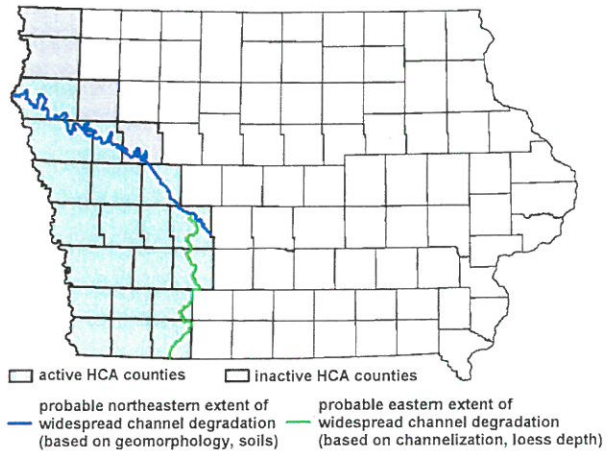
Bernie Bolton  
Chairman  
Loess Hills Development and Conservation Authority

Enc.

# HUNGRY CANYONS ALLIANCE – Dec 2020 Update

## The Problem

The Hungry Canyons Alliance (HCA) was formed locally to research and implement solutions to the problem of stream channel erosion and degradation in a 19 county area of the deep loess soils region of western Iowa. Channelization of streams and land use changes during the first half of the 1900's caused stream channels to erode, causing an estimated \$1.1 billion in damages to public and private infrastructure (bridges, culverts, utility lines, etc.), loss of farmland, and increased sediment loads. A 2013 survey of county infrastructure in western Iowa revealed that a total of 415 bridges, culverts, and flumes were still endangered due to stream channel degradation. Golden Hills RC&D in Oakland, Iowa helped to form and currently provides office space and administrative assistance to the HCA.



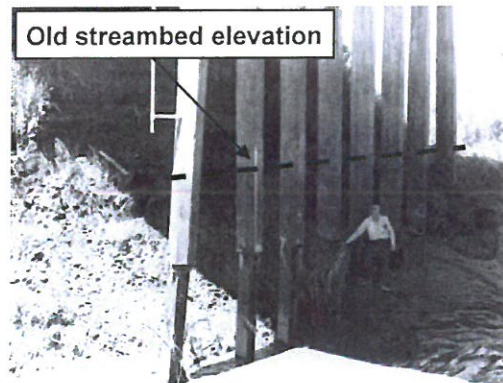
Straightened versus meandering stream. (Walnut Creek, Pottawattamie County).

## The Solution

A proven, affordable solution to this problem is to build grade control structures in streams. Grade control structures (GCS) at regular intervals help streams stabilize by changing their longitudinal profile from an erosive steep incline to a stable stair-step pattern. Streambed stabilization is the key to preventing further erosion and protecting infrastructure. GCS design is largely dependent on drainage area. Small drainage areas can often be controlled with reinforced concrete box (RCB) or corrugated metal pipe (CMP) culverts with drop inlets and/or flume outlets. Large drainage areas are often controlled with weirs constructed with steel sheet pile driven into the streambed, with a riprap and concrete grout slope immediately downstream, a loose riprap stilling basin downstream of the weir slope, and loose riprap covered banks. Both RCB/CMP and weir designs allow the stream elevation to drop in a controlled setting, restore lost stream grade, prevent further degradation, and reduce streambed slope upstream. This creates a calm backwater condition where silt can settle out, decreasing sediment loads and turbidity and increasing water quality. Sediment re-deposited upstream then helps support formerly exposed bridge pilings and stabilize eroded streambanks.

## The Savings

The HCA provides state and federal money available to the 19 counties through a cost share program for grade control structures (GCS). County governments provide a minimum of 20% match for each GCS. Since 1992, the program has provided \$25.5 million in state and federal appropriations and the technical assistance needed to complete 406 GCS in 19 counties in western Iowa. Another 8 GCS are in progress. These GCS will protect an estimated \$99.0 million in property value. It is estimated that 768.7 acres of land, equivalent to 23.1 million tons of sediment, will be protected from erosion by construction of the 414 GCS. HCA grade control structures, with an average cost of \$67,067,



Bridge endangered by exhumation of pilings.



protect approximately \$239,055 in property per GCS. **For every \$1 invested in HCA grade control structures, on average more than \$4.25 of property value and 0.89 tons of sediment are protected from streambed degradation.** During FY 2020, the HCA completed construction on seven GCS, but did not obligate any cost share to new projects because all funds went toward matching the EWP projects described below.

A second HCA program provides funding to landowners where grade control is necessary to stabilize active gully erosion. This program is funded with the interest earned from state appropriations. This program has built 130 structures with cost share totalling \$884,426.

The HCA has quarterly meetings at which issues concerning stream erosion and streambed stabilization are discussed. Tours show firsthand which aspects of past GCS designs have worked and which haven't while also highlighting new techniques which can be used to enhance future GCS performance. Regular attendees include county engineers and supervisors, NRCS & DNR employees, SWCD commissioners, consultants, contractors, and landowners.

Over 1,500 GCS of all types have been constructed in 19 western Iowa counties by county governments, the HCA, NRCS, NRCS-EWP, SWCD, Iowa DOT, cities, utility (water, gas, telephone, electric, etc.) companies, railroad companies, Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa DNR, and landowners. This is the greatest concentration of GCS anywhere in the world due to the loess soils, highly altered unstable stream system, high drainage density, and high road density. With so many GCS located in one area, western Iowa has been referred to as a "laboratory" for GCS design. And because western Iowa is still experiencing streambed degradation, the HCA is one of the unheralded leaders in innovative GCS research, design, and construction.



Top: 4 foot high sheet pile weir with a 1:20 grouted riprap slope in Crawford County. Bottom: RCB flume with 25 feet of fall in Fremont County.

## Matching Federal Funding for Flood Recovery

Heavy precipitation in May 2007 and June 2008, and again in March and June of 2019, resulted in widespread stream channel damage and destroyed county road infrastructure. However, in the investigations that followed, FEMA, NRCS, and county road departments all reported that GCS directly reduced infrastructure and channel damage costs and the number of FEMA program claims, and infrastructure protected by GCS suffered no damage. Although some GCS suffered minor damage, these damages were minimal compared to the potential total loss of infrastructure that could have resulted without the GCS.

Federal NRCS-EWP funding became available after the disaster declarations; so in order to complete as many projects as possible and reduce the counties' burden to 15% match, the HCA provided 10% match (using state cost share) for all EWP projects which provided grade control or were directly associated with existing GCS projects. Between September 2008 and January 2011, **72 GCS projects were completed at a cost of \$12.83 million. The HCA provided \$1.28 million in cost share**, the EWP program \$9.50 million, and the sponsor counties \$2.05 million. **In 2020, 26 GCS projects have been completed, and another 47 will be completed in 2021 at a total estimated cost of \$11.7 million. The HCA will provide \$1.17 million in cost share**, the EWP program \$8.77 million, and the sponsor counties \$1.76 million.

## HCA Research

Completed HCA research projects include design of GCS to provide fish passage, use of scrap tires in GCS, aerial stream video and classification of western Iowa streams, factors controlling knickpoint migration, and the use of directional drilling in small watershed GCS projects. Ongoing research projects include experimenting with new bank stabilization techniques and measuring nutrient loads from eroding streambanks to quantify the impact of channel stabilization projects. Partners in these projects include: NRCS, Iowa DOT Highway Research Board, IIHR—Hydroscience and Engineering at the University of Iowa, Natural Resource Ecology and Management Department at Iowa State University, Civil Engineering Department at Iowa State University, Iowa DNR, US Geological Survey, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

# Hungry Canyons Alliance

## I. Project Overview

### A. Purpose:

- Focus attention on the problems of, and develop solutions related to, stream channel degradation in the deep loess region of western Iowa.

### B. Needs:

- 415 bridges, flumes, and major culverts susceptible to significant damage from stream degradation in 2013 (from correspondence with county engineers).

### C. Goals:

- Provide financial and technical assistance to construct grade control structures (GCS) in 19 counties in western Iowa.
- Conduct research and provide demonstration for members.

## II. Progress Report (1992-2020)

### A. HCA Structures as of 12-22-20:

1. GCS approved:	414
2. GCS completed:	406
3. GCS in progress:	8

### B. HCA Costs as of 12-22-20:

1. Total costs:	\$ 27,765,783
2. Total HCA cost share spent:	\$ 19,620,265
3. Total HCA cost share obligated:	\$ 649,331
4. Cost share per structure:	\$ 48,960
5. Counties share of total cost spent:	\$ 7,318,855
6. Counties share of total cost obligated:	\$ 177,333

### C. HCA Benefits as of 12-22-20:

1. Total property protected:	\$ 98,968,603
2. Property protected per structure:	\$ 239,055

***For every \$1 invested in Hungry Canyons Alliance grade control structures (GCS), an average of more than \$4.25 in property value and 0.89 tons of sediment are protected.***

### Match for EWP Program:

Occasionally, western Iowa counties will be declared eligible for federal disaster assistance due to severe rains which cause flooding and stream channel damage, endangering or destroying county infrastructure. The NRCS-EWP program will provide cost share for new GCS and repairs to existing GCS. In order to complete as many EWP projects as possible while the federal money is available to western Iowa, the HCA will provide 10% of the match, reducing the counties match to 15%, for any EWP projects which provided grade control or were directly associated with existing GCS projects. In FY10, the state appropriated \$100,000 to the HCA specifically for this purpose.

### D. EWP Structures and Costs as of 12-22-20:

1. GCS completed:	102
2. GCS in progress:	47
3. Total costs spent	\$ 16,662,957
4. Total HCA cost share spent:	\$ 1,666,759
5. Total HCA cost share obligated:	\$ 815,958
6. Total NRCS cost share spent:	\$ 12,387,097
7. Total counties share spent:	\$ 2,609,101

Spring and summer flooding in 2019 triggered EWP funding for 69 sites in western Iowa totaling about \$13 million of repair work. The repair work will continue through summer 2021.

### III. Funding Summary (1992-2020)

#### A. Total Appropriations:

1. Federal:	\$ 11,944,394
2. State:	\$ 14,101,334
3. Total:	\$ 26,045,728
4. County share:	\$ 8,886,938

#### B. Funds Needed:

- Total needed to reach goal of protecting 186 bridges, flumes, and major culverts: \$10.23 million
- Annual appropriations of \$0.9 million (\$0.45 million in state funds, \$0.45 million in federal funds) for 11.4 more years (assuming no disastrous floods)

### IV. Accomplishments of the Past Year

- A. Approved cost share for 69 EWP projects.
- B. Completed construction of 7 county GCS and 1 small GCS for landowners.
- C. Held two successful quarterly meetings.
- D. Continued technical assistance to the NRCS and local sponsors for EWP projects damaged in the 2019 spring and summer flooding.
- E. Continued inventory of scanned PL-566, PL-534, pilot, and RC&D watershed structure documents through an agreement with the NRCS.
- F. Gave free advice to numerous landowners, cities, county conservation boards, and county road departments on cost-effective methods of streambank stabilization.
- G. Helped organize the Partnership for River Restoration and Science in the Upper Midwest's (PRRSUM) February 2020 Upper Midwest Stream Restoration Symposium (UMSRS) held in Stillwater, MN.
- H. Continued serving as a vocal stakeholder in the ongoing process to setup an in-lieu fee program to deal with compensatory mitigation requirements in Iowa stemming from changes in the way the Rock Island USACE office interprets federal rules. Coupled with the creation of the new Iowa Stream Mitigation Method (ISMM), a tool designed to help standardize mitigation decisions during the USACE permit process, permits requiring mitigation have increased. This has put the USACE in direct conflict with other federal and state programs aimed at flood control and conservation.
- I. Continued a research project led by Iowa State University to measure nutrient loads from eroding streambanks in western Iowa with the goal to make a case for funding stream bed and bank stabilization due to the current emphasis on the state's nutrient reduction strategy.

### V. Strategy for the Coming Year

- A. Continue to protect infrastructure and prevent soil loss by providing state cost share to county governments and private landowners for streambed erosion control projects.
- B. Continue providing education to students and the public about the fragility of loess soils and river channel stability and processes.
- C. Continue cooperation with Iowa DNR Fisheries Division and US Fish and Wildlife Service to modify existing grade control structures to allow fish migration.
- D. Continue work with the NRCS to inventory PL-566, PL-534, pilot, and RC&D watershed structure documents statewide.
- E. Continue monitoring and building bored headcut basins in the Loess Hills in conjunction with the USDA-NRCS and IDALS. Despite being experimental, the bored headcut basin design was recognized in 2015 by the NRCS as an approved, viable, cost-effective method of controlling deep gully headcuts with small drainage areas in the Loess Hills.
- F. Continue to provide technical assistance for bank stabilization projects.



## Hungry Canyons Projects in Progress as of 12-21-20

### Grade Control Projects - Uses State Funds

Project #	County (or sponsor)	Stream	Total Cost	HCA Share	Sponsor Share
14-1	Ida	Soldier R.	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
14-8	Ida	Maple R. Trib.	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
18-1	Guthrie	Lone Grove Crk.	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 112,000.00	\$ 28,000.00
18-2	Guthrie	Lone Grove Crk.	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 96,000.00	\$ 24,000.00
18-3	Guthrie	Lone Grove Crk.	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
19-6	Woodbury	Big Whiskey Crk. Trib.	\$ 64,080.00	\$ 51,264.00	\$ 12,816.00
19-7	Woodbury	Big Crk. Trib.	\$ 52,584.00	\$ 42,067.20	\$ 10,516.80
19-11	Monona	Elk Crk.	\$ 190,000.00	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
<b>Total</b>			\$ 826,664.00	\$ 649,331.20	\$ 177,332.80

### Stream Profile Surveys - Uses State Funds

Project #	County (or sponsor)	Stream	Total Cost	HCA Share	Sponsor Share
SPS-18-1	Guthrie	Lone Grove Crk.	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
<b>Total</b>			\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 2,000.00

### Small Structure Projects - Uses Interest Funds

Project #	County	Location/Notes	Name	Total cost	HCA Cost Share
				\$ -	\$ -
<b>Totals</b>				\$ -	\$ -

## Hungry Canyons Projects in Progress as of 12-21-20 (continued)

### EWP Agreements 2019-2020 - Uses State Funds

DSR Number	Site Name	County / Sponsor	Total Cost	NRCS Cost	HCA Cost	Sponsor Cost
19-03-19-5026-075	Craw 1	Crawford	\$ 293,552	\$ 220,164.00	\$ 29,355.20	\$ 44,032.80
19-04-19-5026-014	Upper Beaver M-1	Monona SWCD	\$ 46,050	\$ 34,537.50	\$ 4,605.00	\$ 6,907.50
19-04-19-5026-100	Big Coon D-2-1	Woodbury SWCD	\$ 10,625	\$ 7,968.75	\$ 1,062.50	\$ 1,593.75
19-04-19-5026-097	Heisler Creek 59+74	Woodbury SWCD	\$ 100,376	\$ 75,282.00	\$ 10,037.60	\$ 15,056.40
19-04-19-5026-098	Weber Creek 211+06.1	Woodbury SWCD	\$ 62,827	\$ 47,120.25	\$ 6,282.70	\$ 9,424.05
19-04-19-5026-136	Wood 002	Woodbury	\$ 316,831	\$ 237,623.25	\$ 31,683.10	\$ 47,524.65
19-04-19-5026-137	Wood 003	Woodbury	\$ 316,831	\$ 237,623.25	\$ 31,683.10	\$ 47,524.65
19-04-19-5026-096	Wood 007	Woodbury	\$ 190,893	\$ 143,169.75	\$ 19,089.30	\$ 28,633.95
19-03-19-5026-093	Mills 1	Mills	\$ 248,175	\$ 186,131.25	\$ 24,817.50	\$ 37,226.25
19-03-19-5026-038	Mont 7 257th	Montgomery	\$ 171,575	\$ 128,681.25	\$ 17,157.50	\$ 25,736.25
19-03-19-5026-039	Mont 8 270th Tarkio	Montgomery	\$ 171,575	\$ 128,681.25	\$ 17,157.50	\$ 25,736.25
19-03-19-5026-064	Mont 10	Montgomery	\$ 175,000	\$ 131,250.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 26,250.00
19-03-19-5026-065	Mont 11	Montgomery	\$ 178,225	\$ 133,668.75	\$ 17,822.50	\$ 26,733.75
19-03-19-5026-071	Mont 17	Montgomery	\$ 126,875	\$ 95,156.25	\$ 12,687.50	\$ 19,031.25
19-03-19-5026-072	Mont 18	Montgomery	\$ 89,600	\$ 67,200.00	\$ 8,960.00	\$ 13,440.00
19-03-19-5026-073	Mont 19	Montgomery	\$ 101,775	\$ 76,331.25	\$ 10,177.50	\$ 15,266.25
19-03-19-5026-074	Mont 20	Montgomery	\$ 71,000	\$ 53,250.00	\$ 7,100.00	\$ 10,650.00
19-04-19-5026-095	Mont 21	Montgomery	\$ 94,750	\$ 71,062.50	\$ 9,475.00	\$ 14,212.50
19-03-19-5026-080	Page 1	Page	\$ 690,175	\$ 517,631.25	\$ 69,017.50	\$ 103,526.25
19-03-19-5026-081	Page 2	Page	\$ 929,800	\$ 697,350.00	\$ 92,980.00	\$ 139,470.00
19-03-19-5026-082	Page 3	Page	\$ 71,225	\$ 53,418.75	\$ 7,122.50	\$ 10,683.75
19-03-19-5026-083	Page 4	Page	\$ 613,900	\$ 460,425.00	\$ 61,390.00	\$ 92,085.00
19-03-19-5026-084	Page 5	Page	\$ 73,085	\$ 54,813.75	\$ 7,308.50	\$ 10,962.75
19-03-19-5026-087	Page 8	Page	\$ 382,450	\$ 286,837.50	\$ 38,245.00	\$ 57,367.50
19-03-19-5026-088	Page 9	Page	\$ 494,455	\$ 370,841.25	\$ 49,445.50	\$ 74,168.25
19-03-19-5026-089	Page 10	Page	\$ 513,450	\$ 385,087.50	\$ 51,345.00	\$ 77,017.50
19-03-19-5026-091	Page 12	Page	\$ 189,500	\$ 142,125.00	\$ 18,950.00	\$ 28,425.00
19-03-19-5026-124	Pott 0	Pottawattamie	\$ 109,730	\$ 82,297.50	\$ 10,973.00	\$ 16,459.50
19-03-19-5026-125	Pott 1	Pottawattamie	\$ 105,425	\$ 79,068.75	\$ 10,542.50	\$ 15,813.75
19-03-19-5026-126	Pott 2	Pottawattamie	\$ 191,100	\$ 143,325.00	\$ 19,110.00	\$ 28,665.00
19-03-19-5026-127	Pott 3	Pottawattamie	\$ 85,875	\$ 64,406.25	\$ 8,587.50	\$ 12,881.25
19-03-19-5026-142	Pott 4	Pottawattamie	\$ 50,025	\$ 37,518.75	\$ 5,002.50	\$ 7,503.75
19-03-19-5026-128	Pott 5	Pottawattamie	\$ 248,500	\$ 186,375.00	\$ 24,850.00	\$ 37,275.00
19-03-19-5026-139	Pott 6	Pottawattamie	\$ 39,475	\$ 29,606.25	\$ 3,947.50	\$ 5,921.25
19-03-19-5026-140	Pott 7	Pottawattamie	\$ 39,375	\$ 29,531.25	\$ 3,937.50	\$ 5,906.25
19-03-19-5026-129	Pott 8	Pottawattamie	\$ 53,900	\$ 40,425.00	\$ 5,390.00	\$ 8,085.00
19-03-19-5026-130	Pott 9	Pottawattamie	\$ 51,225	\$ 38,418.75	\$ 5,122.50	\$ 7,683.75
19-03-19-5026-141	Pott 10	Pottawattamie	\$ 79,750	\$ 59,812.50	\$ 7,975.00	\$ 11,962.50
19-03-19-5026-131	Pott 11	Pottawattamie	\$ 19,390	\$ 14,542.50	\$ 1,939.00	\$ 2,908.50
19-03-19-5026-132	Pott 13	Pottawattamie	\$ 83,500	\$ 62,625.00	\$ 8,350.00	\$ 12,525.00
19-03-19-5026-133	Pott 15	Pottawattamie	\$ 50,245	\$ 37,683.75	\$ 5,024.50	\$ 7,536.75
19-03-19-5026-138	Pott 16	Pottawattamie	\$ 174,425	\$ 130,818.75	\$ 17,442.50	\$ 26,163.75
19-03-19-5026-143	Pott 17	Pottawattamie	\$ 53,065	\$ 39,798.75	\$ 5,306.50	\$ 7,959.75
			\$ 8,159,580.00	\$ 6,119,685.00	\$ 815,958.00	\$ 1,223,937.00

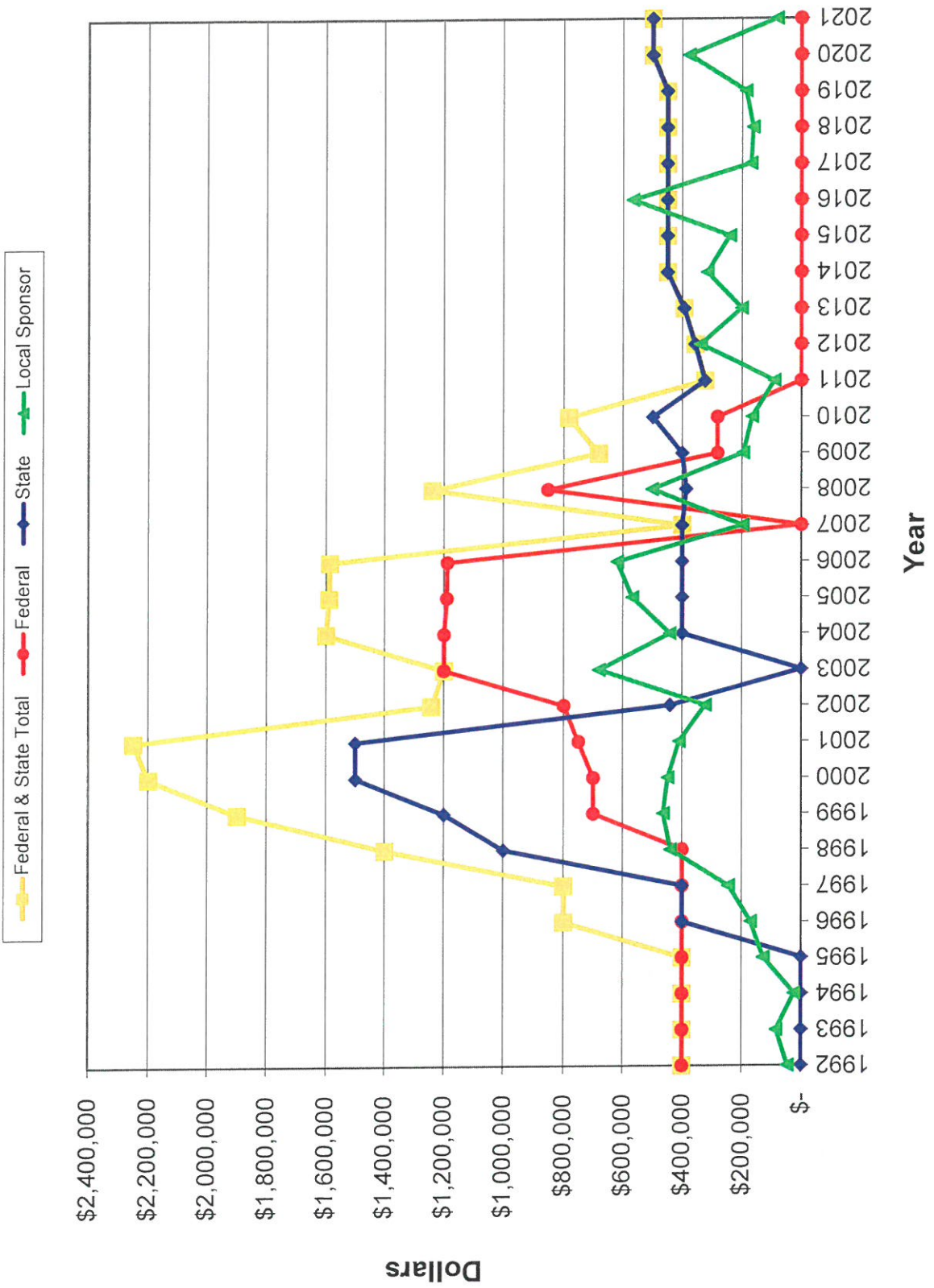
**Hungry Canyons Alliance**  
**Approved FY2021 Budget**  
**July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021**

<b>I. Available or expected funds</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Contract</b>	<b>Federal</b>
A. New appropriations	\$ 500,000			Contract income will be reimbursed to salary	\$ -
B. Unobligated state appropriations (pre-FY21) (6/30/20)	\$ 908,319				
C. Unobligated interest (6/30/20)		\$ 86,157			
D. Differed salary already paid to GH (6/30/20)			\$ 18,030		
E. Unobligated county fees & interest (6/30/20)			\$ 30,699		
F. County dues received for FY21 (6/30/20)			\$ 42,500		
G. County dues expected for FY21 (6/30/20)			\$ 38,250		
H. WMA-HUD project expected for FY21 (6/30/20)				\$ 800	
I. PL-534/566 project expected for FY21 (6/30/20)				\$ 20,400	
J. Culvert manual project expected for FY21 (6/30/20)				\$ -	
<b>Total available funds</b>	<b>\$ 1,408,319</b>	<b>\$ 86,157</b>	<b>\$ 129,480</b>	<b>\$ 21,200</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

<b>II. Expenses from state and federal appropriations</b>					
<b>A. Available for projects</b>					
1. HCA county structures	\$ 1,326,319				\$ -
<b>B. HCA administration</b>					
1. LHDCA administrative expenses from state appropriations (1.75%)	\$ 8,750				
2. GHRC&D administrative expenses (5% of FY2020 approp., but not < \$35,000)	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ -		
3. Staff (salary, benefits)	\$ 6,250	\$ 9,875	\$ 62,875	\$ -	\$ -
<b>C. Research and education</b>					
1. Research, education, & development (GIS, special projects, stream table, other)	\$ -				
2. Stage-discharge / crest-stage gages	\$ -				
3. Aerial video reconnaissance - misc.	\$ -				
4. Aerial video development	\$ -				
5. Bank erosion & nutrients research project	\$ -				
6. Road signs	\$ -				
7. Stream profile surveys	\$ 15,000				
8. Experimental bored headcut basins	\$ 17,000				
9. Experimental scrap tire structures	\$ -				
<b>III. Expenses from interest fund</b>					
<b>A. Available for projects</b>					
1. HCA small structures		\$ 17,000			
<b>IV. Expenses from county fees</b>					
<b>A. Administration</b>					
1. Insurance			\$ 700		
2. Supplies/equipment (computer, camera, cell phone, etc.)			\$ 1,700		
3. Postage			\$ 200		
4. Office / field assistants			\$ -		
5. Meeting expenses & travel			\$ 2,500		
6. Conferences/training			\$ 1,200		
7. Subscriptions, books, media			\$ 100		
8. Miscellaneous (cards, awards, etc.)			\$ 100		
9. HCA shirts			\$ 250		
10. Services (web page, maps, etc.)			\$ -		
<b>B. Lobbying</b>					
1. State lobbyist			\$ 7,500		
2. Lobbying trips (DC trip, Des Moines trip)			\$ -		
<b>Subtotal of expenses (no county structures)</b>	<b>\$ 82,000</b>	<b>\$ 26,875</b>	<b>\$ 77,125</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Total budgeted expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,408,319</b>	<b>\$ 26,875</b>	<b>\$ 77,125</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>



# Hungry Canyons Alliance Funding





## Economic Development Activities

The committee consists of representatives from economic development, conservation, recreation, convention and visitors bureaus, elected officials on local and federal levels, and small businesses and tourist attractions. The committee meets quarterly at a central location. The Economic Development Committee worked collaboratively this year to enhance the economy of the Loess Hills region by:

- Providing assistance and resources for small businesses and community attractions.
- Increasing visitor traffic at recreation facilities, events and area attractions.
- Offering education and technical assistance to business and government agencies, to promote economic development opportunities.

### ADVERTISING

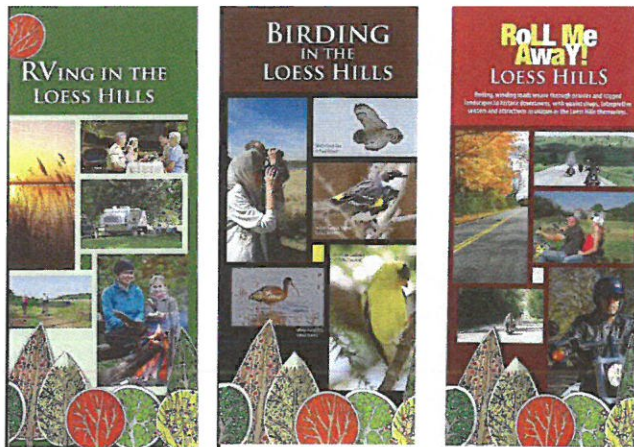
The committee places a high priority on advertising the Loess Hills and promoting businesses and attractions. Advertising was placed in numerous publications that allow information about the Loess Hills to reach into other states as well as here in Iowa.

We continue to have a presence on mycountyparks.com through the Loess Hills counties that have participated with that website. We also continued our regular advertising in the [Sioux City Visitors Guide](#), the [Council Bluffs Visitors Guide](#), and [Our Iowa](#).

### WEBSITE AD: VISITWESTERNIOWA.COM

7,525 website impressions were reached on the Western Iowa Tourism Region's (WITR) website. They also continue to fulfill requests for individual information as well as Welcome Centers for the Loess Hills and the counties included. Many calls were fielded this year about what attractions and businesses were open, what campgrounds were available, etc. Contact with attractions, area tourism directors and County Conservation Boards was crucial as information was fluid and changed quickly.

WITR also continues to share and post information on events and attractions on their Facebook page. They have thousands of likes and post events that they receive advance notice of as well as any photos they are provided. The activity on their Facebook page far outpaces the website traffic.



### IOWA TRAVEL GUIDE

An ad was placed in the Iowa Travel Guide showing the cover of the Loess Hills Visitors Guide. One was released in the Spring and another in the Fall. This was a new marketing strategy to try to entice more visitors to the State.

### GUIDEBOOK

The committee continues to place and distribute the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway™ Guidebook. They are distributed to welcome centers throughout the state and to area attractions and visitors centers as well. The Loess Hills Guidebook has been recognized by industry leaders as one of the gold standards for guidebooks.

### FULFILLMENT

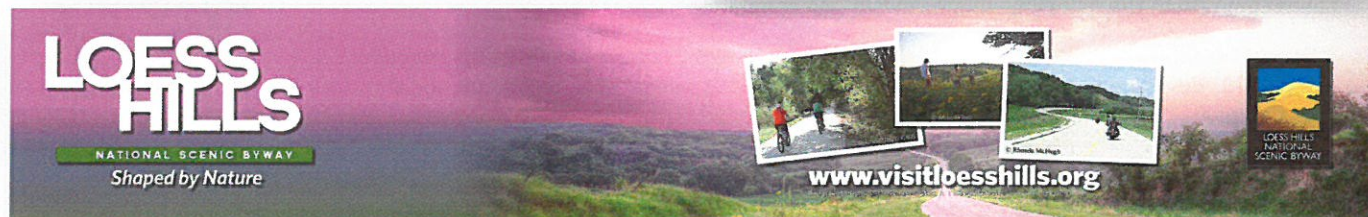
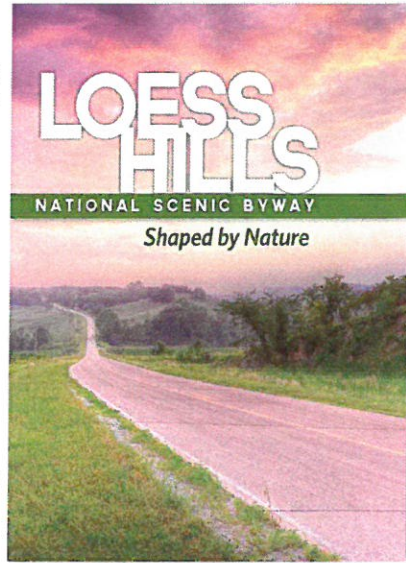
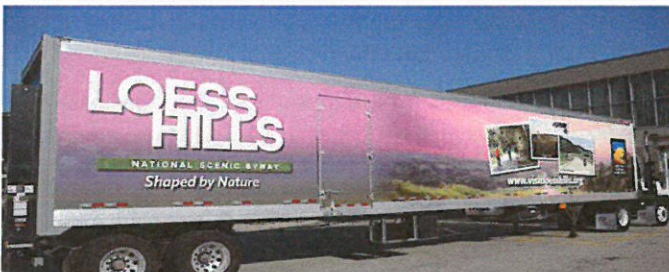
The Western Iowa Tourism Region (WITR) receives and fulfills requests for information about the Loess Hills and the Alliance. For the Fiscal Year running July 2019-June 2020 fulfillment pieces mailed on behalf of the Alliance continued to show high demand. Each year thousands of Loess Hills Visitors Guides are placed with additional information about attractions, byway info and the three brochures for Birding, RVing and Motorcycling being included as well. There is a direct effect on requests for Loess Hills information that can be seen in conjunction with the advertising that is placed. As soon as an ad comes out, the inquiry rate rises. People are also asked where they heard about the Loess Hills. Their responses help drive the advertising strategy.

### BROCHURES

The brochures that feature birding, motorcycling and RVing are in demand. They continue to be placed in welcome centers and area attractions and businesses. Several printings have been necessary to keep up with the demand for them and yet another reprinting is being planned.

### TRUCK WRAP

A 53 foot semi-truck is traveling around Iowa showcasing the Loess Hills. This is a partnership with the Iowa Tourism Office and the trucks are part of the Iowa Alcohol Beverages Division (ABD).



## Protection Activities

The Protection Committee expended \$12,500 in 2020 for two projects: a conservation easement on the Hebert property in Plymouth County led by The Nature Conservancy (\$8,500), and a Vegetation Management project in Monona County led by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

The two projects both were reviewed by the Protection Committee and submitted to the full Board with a recommendation to fund. The Executive Committee awarded an additional \$4,000 to the Hebert conservation easement to increase the award to the full amount requested in the proposal.



Loess Hills after vegetation management, Monona County

The Monona County Vegetation Management project will conduct restoration activities performed by the Conservation Corps of Iowa on land owned by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. Vegetation management will focus on Eastern Red Cedar removal. The project will add to the ongoing restoration of

Loess Hills properties located between Turin State Preserve and the Loess Hills State Forest/Preparation Canyon State Park. The Loess Hills National Scenic Byway runs along the northern and western border of the property being restored. LHA funding will be matched 3:1 by other funding sources.



Hebert property, Plymouth County

The Hebert conservation easement will permanently protect a working farm in the Loess Hills. The Hebert property is currently farmed by a young farmer who is interested in continuing to farm the property but wishes to protect against future conversion of the property for rural-residential development and livestock confinement facilities, both of which are increasingly common uses of properties in the area. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has committed to fund 50% of the conservation easement value. LHA funding will be matched 14:1.

The Loess Hills region includes some of Iowa's most precious cultural, historic and natural resources. Since the 1980's, **two nationally significant intrinsic qualities have been verified in the region— natural areas and Prehistoric cultural resources.** The unique geological and topographic features of the hills, the extensive natural and semi-natural grasslands and forests and the many archaeological sites found in this one geologic landform create a treasure for the region. **More than 35,000 acres of land in the Loess Hills are in permanent protection.**



## Stewardship Activities

The Stewardship Committee continued to financially support the private lands position employed by Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quails Forever. This position is partnered with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide wildlife technical assistance to farmers and private landowners. In FY20 the biologists had more than 500 landowners contacts and developed conservation plans, burn plans, wildlife plans, and habitat proposals.

Jason Andersen started as a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist in 2015 and transferred to replace Nic Salick. Jason now covers Harrison, Pottawattamie, and Shelby Counties and is based out of the Council Bluffs USDA Field Office. In 2020, Jason delivered four workshops focused on prairie reconstruction and management. He also worked with landowners to impact more than 260 acres of Loess Hills habitats of Harrison and Pottawattamie Counties, including approximately 40 acres of remnant prairie.

Stewardship also committed funds to the Loess Hills Cooperative Burn Week and Hitchcock Nature Center BioBlitz, but neither event happened due to COVID-19. The committee will issue an RFP for new projects in early 2021.



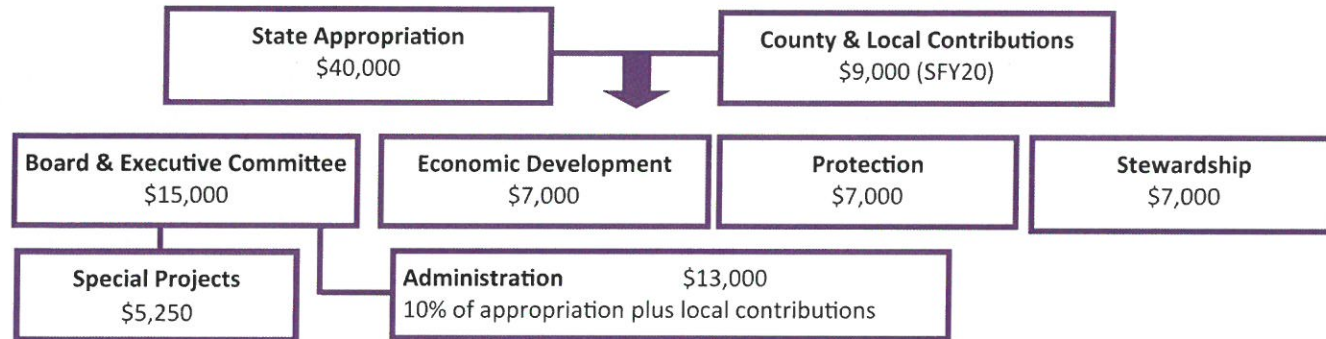


## Executive Committee Summary

The Loess Hills Alliance Executive Committee provides leadership to the Board of Directors and ensures that funds appropriated through state funding are leveraged with other sources and used wisely. The most successful use of those funds has included partnering with other organizations, farmers and private land owners to leverage the dollars for the best possible, mutually beneficial outcome within the Loess Hills.

In 2017, the State appropriation to the Loess Hills Alliance was significantly decreased from an historical annual award of \$150,000 to \$40,000. This decrease has significantly impacted the collective ability to support our three objective areas of stewardship, protection and economic development for the region.

The 2020 funds were distributed as follows:



*The Loess Hills Alliance has matched state appropriated funds for projects at rates from 3:1 to 35:1. Since SFY2013, the Alliance has supported and leveraged more than \$3 million in projects and resources toward the Loess Hills Region.*

## Executive Committee

Dawn Snyder, Chair  
Rich Pope, Vice Chair

Tammy Bramley, Secretary  
Renea Anderson, Treasurer

Graham McGaffin, At Large  
Patty McCall, At Large  
Robert Benton, At Large

## 2020 Board of Directors

### Plymouth County

Nick Beeck  
John Meis  
Gary Horton

### Monona County

Patty McCall  
Tammy Bramley  
Alan Dale

### Pottawattamie County

Scott Belt  
Jeff Franco  
Mark Shoemaker

### Fremont County

Robert Benton  
Dustin Sheldon  
Mike Fox

### Woodbury County

Dawn Snyder  
Marty Pottebaum  
Rich Pope

### Harrison County

Scott Pape  
John Straight  
Linda Herman

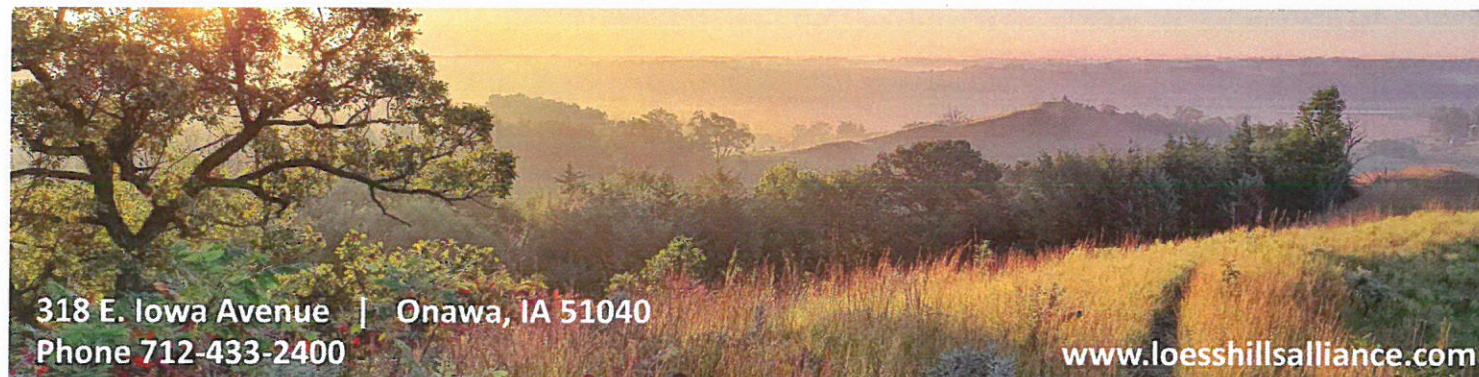
### Mills County

Lonnie Mayberry  
Carol Vinton

### LHDCA Appointees

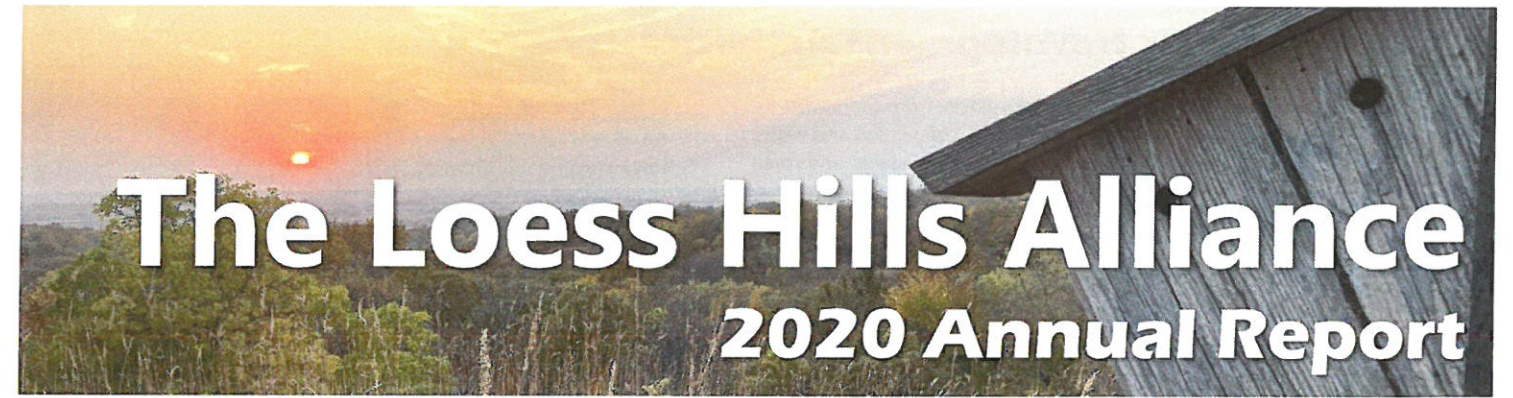
Brett Bengard, Iowa Division of Soil Conservation  
Renea Anderson, Western Iowa Tourism Region  
Graham McGaffin, The Nature Conservancy  
Jeff Seago, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Whitney Reimers, Iowa Bankers Association  
Lance Brisbois, Golden Hills RC&D  
Brent McCall, Iowa Realtors Association



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Phone 712-433-2400

[www.loesshillsalliance.com](http://www.loesshillsalliance.com)



## Our Mission

The Loess Hills Alliance strives to protect special natural and cultural resources while ensuring the economic viability and private property rights of the region through the creation of a common vision for Iowa's Loess Hills.

## A region where ...

- The unique land formation, culture, and history of the hills are conserved for future generations
- Areas of special interest are protected from development, soil mining, soil erosion and other visually disruptive activities
- Awareness and educational opportunities are promoted about the unique nature of the region
- Vegetation is managed to encourage native plant and wildlife communities, such as prairie, savanna and oak woodlands
- Regional recreational opportunities and tourism attractions exist and public areas are expanded
- References and resources are available to landowners interested in protecting features on their land
- Local businesses and rural communities are supported

## Executive Summary

The Loess Hills Alliance (LHA) Executive Committee met a total of five times over the past fiscal year. The Loess Hills Alliance Full Board met a total of three times. The May and June 2020 meetings were cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The LHA Executive Committee provided funding for some special projects in FY2020. This included funds to enhance public recreational infrastructure at the Blackburn State Park Unit of Waubonsie State Park. A new vault toilet restroom facility was constructed and was funded in part by Loess Hills Alliance. LHA Executive Committee also assisted the LHA Protection Committee with funding assistance for a conservation easement on the Hebert property in Plymouth County.

Two new promotional stand-up banners were created by LHA to be used by all committees and groups within the Loess Hills to promote the Loess Hills Alliance and projects.

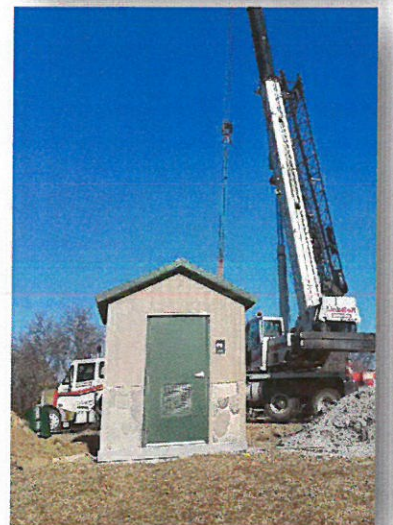
LHA participated in a Western Iowa Legislative forum in Mondamin in December 2019. LHA member Graham McGaffin presented on the Iowa's Water and Land Legacy and promoted the importance of the Loess Hills to regional legislators.

LHA Executive Committee continues to cooperate with and sponsor the Friends of the Loess Hills State Forest. They are diligently working to obtain their IRS 501c(3) status and should be receiving their own IRS 501c(3) status within the next year.

LHA Executive Committee allocated \$2,000 to the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar in Monona County. This annual educational event began in 1977 to study, educate and share the unique aspects of the loess hills with teachers, landowners and the public. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the seminar was postponed in 2020. LHA funds were not expended, but LHA Executive Committee plans to support future efforts of this important educational seminar.

From the \$40,000 legislative appropriation, the Executive Committee recommended (and the Full Board committed) the following monies to the LHA committees:

Stewardship: \$7,000.00; Protection: \$7,000.00; Economic Development: \$7,000.00; Executive: \$15,000.00 with Administrative fees from Legislative sources budgeted at \$4,000.00, the statutory limit.



[www.loesshillsalliance.com](http://www.loesshillsalliance.com)