

**SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY**

The follow are summaries  
for methods to distribute the revenue to the natural resource.  
These methods of distribution are referred to as funding vehicles.

**FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARIES  
IN THIS REPORT**

**RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION (REAP)**

**LOCAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (LCPP)**

**WATERSHED PROTECTION (WP)**

**LAKES RESTORATION (LR)**

**TRAILS**

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (IDNR)**

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND STEWARDSHIP (IDALS)**

After researching and reviewing current streams of funding and budgets, the committee has, conservatively, estimated that a sustainable total of \$150.0 million per year over any base funding is needed to begin to address the needs of Iowa's natural resources. The committee also identified, as noted in their parameters, logical and established methods to distribute the revenue to the natural resource, aka funding vehicles. Discussion points, funding vehicles, and recommended funding amounts to meet the needs are presented in the table below.

<b>FUNDING VEHICLE</b>	<b>DISCUSSION POINTS</b>	<b>FUNDING AMOUNT RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REAP</b> (Resource Enhancement And Protection)	* REAP funds are lacking. County applications are left unfunded at a 5:1 ratio and city applications at a 3:1 ratio. * REAP's current annual allocation is not secure and not sustainable.	1. Fully fund at authorized level of <b>\$20.0 million</b> . 2. Fund at an additional amount of <b>\$20 million</b> from sustainable funding.
<b>LCPP</b> (Local Conservation Partnership Program)	* Funding should go toward county conservation boards, cities, and non-government organizations (NGOs). * Fund local conservation education and outreach, infrastructure, and land management needs.	Fund at <b>\$20.0 million</b> .
<b>WP</b> (Watershed Protection)	* Funding for watershed projects is lacking. Requests for funding by project applicants annually seek twice the funds available. Increased emphasis on the watershed approach to solving environmental problems will further increase demand.	Fund at <b>\$20.0 million</b> .
<b>LR</b> (Lake Restoration)	* Lake Restoration identifies needs in the lake. The watershed is taken care of outside of the Lake Restoration vehicle/funds.	Fund at <b>\$10.0 million</b> .
<b>Trails</b>	* Trails funding should be directed at both maintenance of existing trails and the addition of new trails, marketing, and trail linkages.	Fund at <b>\$15.0 million</b> .
<b>IA DNR</b> (Iowa Department of Natural Resources)	* More funds than currently available are needed for state preserves, the wildlife diversity program, state parks, public access, private landowner programs and incentives, and trail improvements within state parks.	Fund at <b>\$35.0 million</b> . (base increase over and above FY06)
<b>IDALS</b> (Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship)	* Funds are lacking for incentives programs that assist landowners and soil and water conservation districts. Program demand for cost-share and watershed projects exceeds available funds. Funds will, also, be used to support environmental stewardship with regard to agricultural and livestock issues.	Fund at <b>\$30.0 million</b> . (base increase over and above FY06)
<b>TOTAL OF ALL FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS \$150.0 million annually</b>		
With dedicated recommended funding, local, state, and NGOs can use this new and/or base increase over FY budget amounts to apply for leverage funds when possible. The recommended funding should be dedicated and sustainable since leveraged funds are neither.		

To detail further the concepts that directed the committee toward the recommended figures, accomplishments (aka actions) were determined that the new dedicated sustainable funds would provide to lowans. These actions are identified by their connection to the natural resource category and to which funding vehicle may possibly support them. These actions are expanded on in the attached funding vehicle summaries.

Natural Resource Category	Action	Possible Funding Vehicles
<b>PARKS AND TRAILS</b>		
Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* improve state, county, city park infrastructure</li> <li>* create a grade-A system of state and local parks               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* shelter houses</li> <li>* trails</li> <li>* campgrounds</li> <li>* shelters</li> <li>* beaches</li> <li>* water access</li> <li>* destination sites to draw people from other states</li> </ul> </li> <li>* increase recreational opportunities with the goal of providing every lowan a place to go for outdoor recreation within one half-hour of their home</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP LR IA DNR Trails
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* create a trail system that will serve the recreational diversity of lowans and attract visitors and tourists.</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP IA DNR Trails
<b>SOIL AND WATER</b>		
Soil (conservation practices)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* accelerate application of soil and water conservation practices</li> <li>* increase awareness of need for conservation systems</li> <li>* encourage and support waterway buffers</li> <li>* protect and restore wetland areas</li> <li>* advocate sustainable farming practices               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conservation tillage</li> <li>- demonstrate innovative methods and new technologies (soil saving techniques, nutrient management, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	WP LR IDALS REAP LCPP IA DNR
Water (quality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* target conservation measures and water quality improvement efforts in watersheds.</li> <li>* reduce sediment</li> <li>* create/build federal, state, and local partnerships</li> <li>* help communities problem solve water quality and water quantity concerns</li> <li>* provide incentives to implement quality improvement programs and efforts</li> </ul>	REAP WP LR IDALS IA DNR LCPP
<b>FISH, WILDLIFE, NATURAL AREAS</b>		
Fish, Wildlife, Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* protect and improve the status of Iowa's wildlife diversity</li> <li>* provide safe habitat for endangered species in Iowa</li> <li>* make Iowa's lakes and streams great places to recreate</li> <li>* provide places for people to see wildlife (i.e. improve wildlife viewing opportunities)</li> <li>* increase opportunities to enjoy Iowa's outdoors</li> <li>* preserve and protect Iowa's high quality natural heritage</li> <li>* ensure that all lowans will have access to natural areas – rural and urban</li> <li>* create and protect access to natural areas</li> <li>* improve hunting and fishing opportunities and access in Iowa–rural and urban</li> <li>* protect, restore and manage prairies, forests, savannas, wetlands, and preserves</li> <li>* provide assistance to landowners to establish/manage the prairie and forestry base</li> <li>* provide adequate monitoring and management of Iowa's natural resources</li> <li>* provide proactive options and quality management against invasive species</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP WP LR IA DNR IDALS Trails
<b>ALL 3 CATEGORIES: PARKS/TRAILS, SOIL/WATER, FISH/WILDLIFE/NATURAL AREAS</b>		
Parks/Trails, Soil/Water, Fish/Wildlife/ Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* provide quality, engaging, and significant environmental and conservation education opportunities for the public, private landowners, and community leaders</li> <li>* establish, strengthen, and maintain nature centers and naturalist programs</li> <li>* educate and encourage private landowners toward productive and innovative land and water management techniques</li> <li>* train developers and community leaders on conservation and environmentally friendly principles toward Iowa's resources</li> <li>* initiate proactive outreach and interpretive programs</li> </ul>	REAP LCPP IA DNR IDALS

**SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY**

**FUNDING VEHICLE:  
RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION (REAP)**

REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection) is a program in the State of Iowa that invests in the enhancement and protection of the state's natural and cultural resources. REAP is funded from the State's Environment First Fund (Iowa gaming receipts) and from the sale of the natural resource license plate. Created in 1989 with a standing, annual appropriation of \$30 million, it was amended in 1996 to reduce the standing appropriation to \$20 million per year and extend it to 2021. REAP has never been funded at its full amount. The state legislature sets the amount of REAP funding each year and in the last six years that level has only averaged approximately \$10 million. Interest from the REAP account and receipts from the sale of natural resource license plates add about \$650,000 to these appropriations. In FY08, legislation appropriated \$15.5 million. REAP is often the ONLY source of funding for small and medium-sized communities in need of city park improvements and historic site preservation because of declining local revenue, affecting perhaps 90% of Iowa towns.

Distribution of REAP funds are based upon a percentage formula that is specified by law. Allocations go to Conservation Education, Administration of the REAP program, DNR Open Spaces (28%), City Parks and Open Spaces (15%), Soil and Water Enhancement (20%), County Conservation (20%), DNR Land Management (9%), Historical Resources (5%), and Roadside Vegetation (3%). Four state agencies administer REAP: Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (Division of Soil Conservation), Department of Cultural Affairs (State Historical Society), and Department of Transportation. The formula ensures distribution to worthy needs at whatever funding level is approved, encourages interests to work together, and provides a proven mechanism for Iowa to address multiple issues. REAP is the oldest, most comprehensive natural/cultural resource funding program that Iowa has ever had; it is a national award winning program that has served as a model for other states as well.

REAP also contains very extensive public participation procedures. REAP is driven by citizen participation through individual grant requests, county committees, regional assemblies, and the state REAP Congress. Individual county REAP committees are organized throughout the state to coordinate REAP projects among the various entities and develop a county REAP plan to help direct future projects. The 17 regional REAP Assemblies are open public meetings where all REAP programs and associated projects are presented, and participants recommend changes to REAP policies, programs, and funding. Five delegates are elected at each of the assemblies to serve on the statewide Congress, which makes recommendations on REAP improvements to the Governor, state legislature, and state agencies.

The Advisory Committee encourages full funding of \$20 million to REAP within its current authorization and \$20 million in addition as a part of the sustainable natural resource funding initiative.

**The following are areas sustainable funding will affect Iowa and Iowans through this funding vehicle:**

In the last four years, Iowans have identified nearly four times the funding amount of projects than what is available from REAP. In the current year alone, county conservation needs are five times more than the REAP budget. Most of these local projects include:

- New recreation trails.
- Addition of critical natural areas.
- Developing parks and campgrounds.
- Rehabilitation of existing trails.

Projects include:

- Protection of critical habitat.
- Opening wild areas and streams to public access.
- Connect, lengthen, and rehabilitate recreational trails.
- Establish buffer strips, wetlands, and roadsides prairies to improve water quality.
- Plant trees and prairies on eroding farm ground.
- Provide campgrounds and city parks with electricity, waste treatment, and modern restrooms.
- Restore historic sites and records to preserve Iowa's heritage.
- Provide education about Iowa conservation for young and adult students.

Benefits from these REAP projects include:

- Local economies and quality of life enhanced through increases in outdoor recreation.
- Iowa's young workforce more encouraged to remain in-state with improved outdoor recreation and higher quality natural resources.
- Land and water stewardship leading to healthy and diverse wildlife and better water quality.
- Health improvements for citizens who increase their activities in enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities.

REAP is the catalyst to leverage more funding committed to natural resources.

- Cities, counties, and conservation organizations often bring to the table three times more money from other sources to match up with REAP funds to complete their projects. REAP money is often their 'seed money' that attracts all these additional funding sources, from Boy Scout troops and Lions Clubs, to federal transportation grants and anonymous donors. Farmers use their own money to match REAP funding for soil and water conservation practices.
- REAP spending on water quality projects is used as the state's match to secure EPA funding for non-point source pollution reduction.

## SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY

### **FUNDING VEHICLE: LOCAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (LCPP)**

This program would provide sustainable funding for infrastructure, nature interpretation and outreach, and conservation management techniques at the local level. The LCPP recognizes that much of what happens with natural resources happens locally. Funds would be distributed via a grant application process to county conservation boards (\$12 million), non-governmental organizations (\$5 million), and cities (\$3 million).

**The following are areas sustainable funding will affect Iowa and Iowans through this funding vehicle:**

#### **Infrastructure:**

- Renovate, develop, or enhance local campgrounds, nature centers, shelters, lodges, trails, bridges, restrooms, cabins, public water supplies, playgrounds, parking, shooting ranges, and other features that facilitate use of local parks and natural areas.
- Renovate areas with modern considerations for today's modern users, and for handicap and elderly users.
- Develop park enhancements that will provide Iowans with healthy and satisfying enjoyment of natural resources within their local communities.
- Provide facilities to underserved population areas.
- Provide outdoor recreation opportunities that will result in a long-term return to the community – leading to improved vitality in Iowa communities.
- Upgrade and construct facilities for park workers, such as maintenance shops, offices, and ranger residences.
- In many cases, substantial funds for infrastructure improvements are able to be leveraged from local community groups and individuals. This leveraging will commonly be 4:1, and can approach 8:1 depending on the agencies and organizations involved.
- Enhance the ability of NGO's to partner with the state, county conservation boards, and cities to develop projects that will improve the public spaces of the state.

Currently, there is no state grant fund established to meet the funding needs for the work described above. There is currently a large backlog of projects that cannot be completed. In Linn County alone there are approximately \$19 million in park capital projects and upgrades. Statewide, the figure is in the hundreds of million.

#### **Interpretation and Outreach:**

- Reach all Iowa youth with interpretive programs in their local region. This has been shown to be a key element in developing citizens who are informed and engaged in their natural resources.
- Provide interpretive programming for underserved segments of the population, such as older students, elderly groups, young parents, etc.
- Provide interpretive programs about natural resources to Iowans in underserved areas (small rural counties and large urban areas).
- Develop citizens who better understand their own local natural spaces, and what they can provide.

- Develop a better awareness, both locally and nationally, that Iowa's communities provide an excellent quality of life (keeping our young people from leaving the state).
- Coordinate more local citizen-science projects, such as people taking care of their water or trying to better understand local wildlife.
- Develop more local exhibits and informative media about nature and the outdoors.
- Provide outreach to private landowners to assist them with ways to implement conservation on their property.
- Educate Iowans in effective conservation techniques to enhance and protect Iowa's natural resources.
- Promote programs for soil, water, wildlife and conservation to producers and farmers within Iowa and include non-resident landowners.
- Create local partnerships, formed as NGOs, with cities and counties work together on providing similar outreach projects. Other local entities, such as Soil and Water Conservation Districts, County Extension Offices, etc., may partner with one of the funded groups to work on projects.
- Better engage youth on service projects in local communities.
- Send more Iowa students to camps and other extended learning opportunities or trainings at parks and natural areas.
- Provide more meaningful life sciences and social studies experiences and education through improved interaction between park interpreters and Iowa school teachers.
- Naturalists and interpretive staff at the local level are flooded with programming needs. In nearly every Iowa county, demand for interpretive programs and materials currently exceeds what the local financial resources can provide.

### **Conservation Management**

There are more than 1,700 areas providing elements of natural resources recreation or appreciation managed by county conservation boards. Additional areas are managed by cities and non governmental groups. Conservation management will restore Iowa's local natural resources using proven techniques such as prescribed fire, invasive species control and reintroduction of native species.

- The threat from invasive species is now seen as perhaps the greatest conservation challenge of our time. These funds will help meet the growing equipment, material, and other costs needed to control these weeds.
- Local lakes, ponds, and wetlands will be better managed for wildlife and water quality control. Currently, there are many water control structures that are in need of repair or replacement.
- Forests require periodic management if natural resource objectives are to be met. These funds will help localities prepare management plans and conduct timber stand improvements. Currently, a large majority of forests do not get the degree of management needed due to lack of funds.
- Prairies require periodic management, including burning, mowing, and herbicide application. These funds will help meet these management needs.
- Local agencies and organizations are strongly involved in managing local areas so as to reduce erosion and water pollution. These funds will create cleaner land and water.
- Measure conservation success and use results for adaptive management.
- If additional funds are not provided to local agencies and organizations, it is very likely Iowa will lose major battles against invasive species. The result will be a large loss of local wildlife and plant populations. Lack of management will adversely impact Iowa's forest, water, and prairie resources, and Iowans' quality of life.

**SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY**

**FUNDING VEHICLE:  
WATERSHED PROTECTION**

Watershed protection is important to every Iowan. As we all know, many years ago our state was covered with prairies, wetlands, and trees. Almost all of the land was broken, drained, and cut to facilitate agriculture development and community growth. Many of our watersheds have minimal protection and, as a result, our streams and lakes are subject to excess siltation, nutrient loading, and other pollutants and contaminants. It is imperative that we protect the existing watersheds and restore all that we can. Watershed protection takes many forms such as wetland restoration, grassland restoration, and runoff filtration. Efforts for watershed protection will enhance the Iowa landscape, quality of life, and help keep Iowans in Iowa.

**The following are areas sustainable funding will affect Iowa and Iowans through this funding vehicle:**

- Provide cleaner water to residents and visitors to the state.
- Improve the water supply which will result in lower cleanup and treatment costs for water.
- Expand recreational opportunities on our lakes, streams, and green spaces.
- Improve groundwater recharge.
- Protect open spaces.
- Increase economic development in the state.
- Provide opportunity for a better quality of life for the citizens of Iowa.
- Increased leveraging ability will expand project and partnership capabilities. Presently, there are several programs in place to assist in protecting our watersheds (i.e.: federal CREP program, NAWCA program, WRP program, and WHIP program). These programs rely on local match. State and local agencies and NGOs have a backlog of projects needing funding. It is difficult to quantify the number and value of projects that are waiting for funding. Some projects are lost because there are not enough matching funds available to qualify for projects. This funding will enhance, expand, and improve the availability of matching grants and partnering opportunities with public and private funding sources.



## SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY

### **FUNDING VEHICLE: LAKES RESTORATION**

Iowans value water quality and desire safe, healthy lakes that provide a full complement of aesthetic, ecological, and recreational benefits. Clean lakes improve the quality of life for Iowans and are compatible with economic growth. 2006 was a milestone year of intensified focus on Iowa's lakes. This emphasis was encouraged by the 2006 Infrastructure Bill (HF2782), which provides additional funding and requires the DNR to use a science-based approach to achieving lake water quality improvements. One hundred twenty seven of Iowa's principal public lakes were ranked for lake restoration suitability based upon a number of socio-economic, water quality, watershed factors. The ranking process resulted in a priority list of thirty-five lakes, which serves as a starting point for consideration of potential lake restoration projects. Local involvement and watershed protection are essential components of all successful lake restoration projects. The DNR is actively working to build partnerships with local stakeholders, private landowners, and natural resource professionals in ensure successful projects.

**The following are areas sustainable funding will affect Iowa and Iowans through this funding vehicle:**

- Current Lake Restoration Funding Level has been \$8.6 million/year for FY 07 and FY 08. Increasing the Lake Restoration legislatively appropriated funding level to \$10 million a year in addition to the \$10 million recommended from sustainable funding will allow the initial thirty-five priority lakes to be completed within the next seven years and allow restoration of the remaining 97 significant public lakes by the year 2030.
- Estimated lake and lake-watershed restoration costs for 35 identified priority lakes in 2005 were estimated at \$205 million (\$130 million in-lake restoration and \$75 million for targeted watershed work). Utilizing a leveraged funding ratio of 55% State of Iowa Lake Restoration and 45% other sources (local, federal & state sources) will require a minimum of 11 years at current funding rates (inflation not included ) to complete the initial 35 priority lake projects.
- The initial list of significant public lakes in Iowa was 127; several other systems should be considered for inclusion bringing the total to 132 lakes. After the 35 priority lakes/watersheds are restored it will then take, at current funding levels, approximately 35 additional years to complete lake and targeted watershed restoration on the remaining significant public lakes. Also, as more lake/watersheds are restored, then funding dollars will need to shift to maintenance of these systems.
- The initial two years of the lake restoration program has allowed the DNR with local sponsors to initiate a number of projects (i.e. Crystal Lake-Hancock Co., Clear Lake-Cerro Gordo Co., Green Valley Lake-Union Co., Lake of Three Fires-Taylor Co. and Lake Darling-Washington Co.). Also, this funding allowed the State to continue our partnership with Storm Lake-Buena Vista Co. By 2008 we will have significantly more

projects ready for the final lake restoration work then available funding (ex. Prairie Rose Lake-Shelby Co., Green Valley Lake-Union Co. and Silver Lake-Delaware Co.)

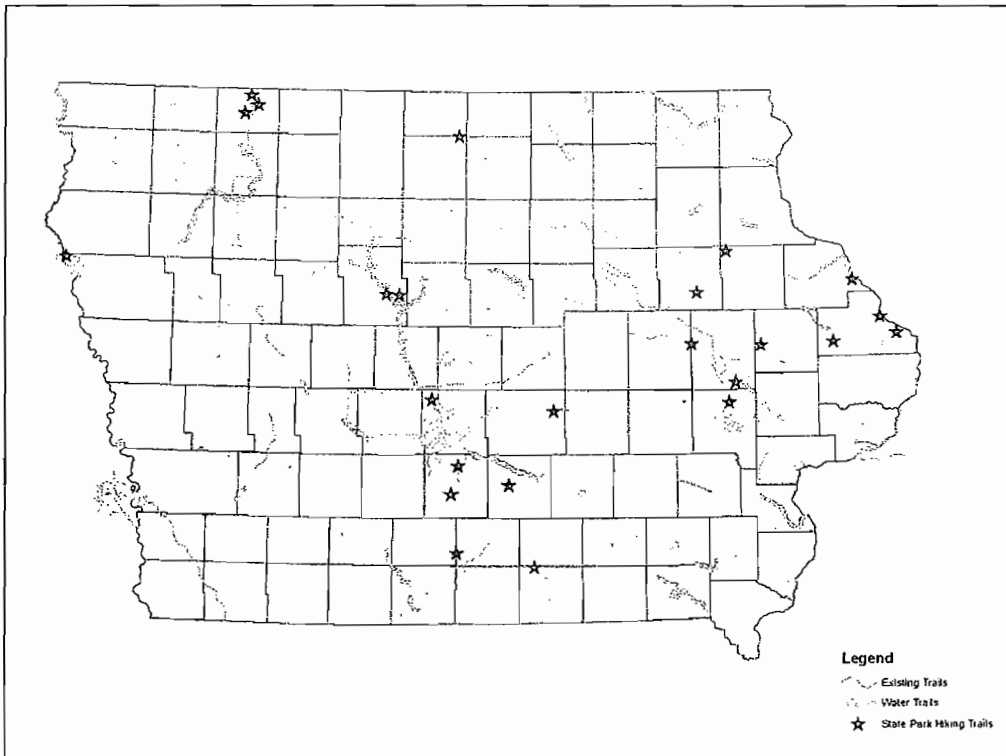
- By improving water quality and extending the lifespan of these lakes, restoration/watershed projects will provide an initial return on investment within five years of project completion and then continue to provide significant economic benefits to local communities and the state (ISU/CARD study currently indicates Clear Lake-Cerro Gordo County provides \$30 million annually to the economy, after restoration this should double). The study also identified lake systems such as Big Creek Lake-Polk County where visitors currently spend \$18.6 million annually to recreate at the lake, resulting in total annual effects from these visits that include \$30.2 million of spending, \$10.7 million of wage and salary income, and 478 jobs. In order to maintain this economic spending and resulting benefits lake/watershed restoration dollars will need to be obligated for Big Creek Lake to reduce sediment/nutrient delivery to the lake and expand in-lake restoration practices.
- Current targeted watershed projects utilize a combination of IDALS/DSC funds, federal farm program conservation funding and landowner cost share. Voluntary partnerships develop that provide benefits to landowners/farmers in the watershed (utilizing 75% state/federal funds and 25% landowner/farmers funds soil loss is dramatically reduced on the landscape and soil and nutrient delivery also reduced to the lake). The end product is increased land value and long term production value to landowners/farmers and improved and sustainable lake water quality.

**SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY**

**FUNDING VEHICLE:  
TRAILS**

In 1991 the Des Moines Register summarized the opportunities Iowa has for strengthening the state's trail system when it wrote "California has beaches, Colorado has mountains, the South has warm winters. Iowa needs something that shouts to the nation "This is a great place to live!" The (amenities) have to be real and trails are real." Recreational trails enhance the area's quality of life making Iowa's communities much more attractive to expand the workforce and help promote active lifestyles. They are an outdoor facility that provides individuals and families a destination to further connect to each other and their natural resources.

Iowa is a national leader in the number miles of multi-use trails. Iowa's regional, state, and nationally significant trails are locally owned and managed by county conservation boards, the state, cities, and non-profit organizations. The recognition, enhancement and promotion of Iowa's great trail systems will require state funding for them to become trails of regional, state and national attraction. Dependable state support is crucial to match federal recreational trails grants and to develop, market, and enhance Iowa's trails.



Existing Multi-Use, Water, and State Park Trails in Iowa

Trails are primarily multi-use paved and non-paved surface paths and greenway corridors typically used for walking, bicycling, in-line skating, wildlife watching, horseback riding and

other uses, and water trails for paddling. In some areas, all-terrain vehicle riding and snowmobiling activities are a component of recreational trail offerings.

Trail systems become economic tools to the region and the state when they feature two key components:

First, they appeal to a broader audience than the local communities surrounding them. Local cultural, historical, and recreational opportunities found along trails could attract enthused users from across the nation. Trails in Iowa create this magnetism by providing users with a diversity of activities, opportunities and experiences. The Wabash Trace Nature Trail in southwest Iowa, for example, allows individuals to view the nationally significant Loess Hills. The Ankeny to Woodward Trail, when completed, will also be a first class attraction that will tie into the Des Moines River Greenbelt and Water Trail. The Mississippi River, one of our nation's longest rivers and significant habitat corridor, is proposed to be the spine for multiple trail projects targeted toward land trail users, paddlers, and wildlife watchers.

Secondly, trail systems provide numerous recreational experiences by offering a variety of distances, connectivity among various types of trails, and diversity of activities. Trails are the gateway for natural resources-based tourism, such as the rapidly expanding wildlife-watching industry. Communities a part of trail systems can provide facilities – such as restaurants, camping, bed and breakfasts, shops, and convenience stores – that attract users to participate in multi-sport weekend trips and add economic development opportunities while providing improved quality of life for members of the local workforce. For example, users can bicycle a portion of trail one day, go trail hiking the next, and paddle the next. The Iowa Great Lakes Trail is an excellent illustration. Users can travel along the trail from Spirit Lake to Okoboji and camp in Okoboji while enjoying tourism amenities.

Trails are often the linkage of several community and county projects. They truly exemplify regional and inter-organizational cooperation and coordination. Local entities, non-profits, and volunteer groups look to the Iowa Department of Transportation's five *Priority Trails Corridors*, plans laid out in *Iowa Trails 2000*, and their own community's comprehensive plan to implement their regional vision.

**The following are areas sustainable funding will affect Iowa and Iowans through this funding vehicle:**

Sustainable funding should be identified for developing, maintaining, and promoting the Iowa's trail system. Approximately \$15 million annually will allow for Iowa to accelerate its position as a national leader in trail development.

#### **Development**

In order to continue to develop trails and implement local plans, there needs to be a sustainable funding source established. Funding is needed for corridor acquisition and development. It is also vital to fund trail signage and amenities such as directional marking along the trail and trail access facilities.

#### **Maintenance**

Identified funding should be available for major maintenance. Several of our prominent long distance trails in Iowa are nearing the end of their surface life span. Costs to repave trails like

the Raccoon River Valley Trail, Neil Smith Trail, or the Cedar Valley Nature Trail are high. Re-routing poorly designed, unsafe and eroding dirt trails is less expensive, but still requires crews of laborers to do the work. Likewise, trails like the Heritage Trail – one of Iowa's oldest rail trails – also face major maintenance challenges as managers continue to battle crushed limestone washouts from heavy rains and flooding, as well as bridge damage, leading to long-term trail closures.

### **Leveraging**

Currently, a large portion of funding for recreational trails arrives from the federal government. In order to utilize federal dollars, local match is usually required. For instance, in 2005, Iowa received over \$40 million in special appropriations for recreational trail projects. A 20% local match is required to utilize those federal dollars prior to 2010. The following federal grant programs are commonly looked to annually for funding:

- Federal Recreational Trails Program- requires a 20% match
- State Transportation Enhancement Program- requires a 30% match
- Regional Transportation Enhancement Program- requires a 20-25% match
- Special Federal Appropriations- typically requires a 20% match.

### **Promotion & Marketing**

Funding for promotional and marketing efforts will expose the state and nationwide users to the full marvel of Iowa trails. Trails and the communities dotting their path can also be enhanced with the cross marketing of trail types. Promotion of Iowa's trails and packaging of recreational opportunities can enhance enthusiasm for nature-based tourism. For example, communities along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail may expand their advertising to paddlers who frequent the Cedar River. Users can spend the weekend at bed & breakfasts or camping bicycling and paddling each day in the summer, cross country skiing and snowmobiling in the winter.

### **Safety**

An important component to recreational activities is safety. Education of proper use and warning of hazards is important as Iowa provides additional trails for individuals and families. It is also important for communities to incorporate emergency signage (E911) on their facilities. Additionally, eliminating hazards allows increase attraction and use of Iowa's trails. Funding should be set aside for local communities and organizations to inform and educate users of and fix trail dangers, such as dangerous intersections or low head dam hazards along water trails.

Creating, promoting and maintaining a comprehensive system of bicycling, walking and water trails is critical to Iowa's future as an active and healthy place to live.

## SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY

### **FUNDING VEHICLE: IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (IDNR)**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is the state agency charged with conserving and enhancing Iowa's natural resources. The general direction of DNR operations is set forth in the Code of Iowa 455A.2: "A department of natural resources is created, which has the primary responsibility for state parks and forests, protecting the environment, and managing energy, fish, wildlife, and land and water resources in this state." The Department is organized into three operational divisions: Conservation and Recreation, Environmental Services, and Management Services. Part of the responsibilities of the Department are to safeguard public lands, public lakes and waters, fish and wildlife resources, threatened and endangered species, facilitate partnerships, and address and manage other related resource programs.

**The following are areas sustainable funding will affect Iowa and Iowans through this funding vehicle:**

#### **Natural Resource Outreach**

There are many benefits to Iowans achieved by being able to provide natural resource outreach. As more Iowans desire and participate in events, activities, land practices, and volunteerism opportunities that involve natural resources, we need to be able to find ways to meet their demand and interest. These would include educational programming, contact and assistance to private landowners, and access to natural resource dependent recreation, such as canoeing, wildlife observation, hunting, fishing, prairie walks, hiking which provide Iowans multiple health and well-being benefits, as well as providing local economical benefits.

- Complete a comprehensive natural resources and outdoors skills education plan, with stakeholder input.
- This would increase the number of educational and environmental programs provided to the public at state parks, bird conservation areas, preserves, wildlife areas, and state forests. This would be done by developing outdoor skills workshops and family outdoor activity/education event packages to meet the interests of young children through seniors, singles through families, men and women.
- Provide programs and activities for youth and families specific to urban areas to increase their involvement in the out-of-doors referencing the National program Leave-No-Child-Inside. Options would include mentored outdoor opportunities for challenged youth partnering with urban organizations.
- Develop a natural resources stewardship program for industries to educate them on how to develop and implement sustainable natural resource habitat practices.
- Enhance and expand efforts where resource specialists work with land owners linking them to federal and state conservation programs. Landowners are willing to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources which would provide private land

management that would improve forest health, species composition, wildlife habitat, water quality, and recreation.

- Provide financial incentives to private landowners for fish, forest, and wildlife habitat practices, just as soil and water conservation programs have.
- Develop a hunter and angler access program. Having coordinated private lands available for outdoor recreation is becoming an increasingly important component for hunters and anglers. States adjacent to Iowa have successfully enrolled millions of private lands acres allowing recreation access.
- Develop natural resource demonstration areas regarding new land stewardship practices with interpretive signage in state parks, forests, and wildlife management areas for informal education opportunities on topics that could encourage Iowans to engage in sustainable/natural resource stewardship activities at home.
- Expand on current efforts to motivate and empower local communities and citizens to improve their natural resources. This can be accomplished through strengthening programs such as Keepers of the Land, AmeriCorps, IOWATER, Project AWARE, where diverse opportunities are provided and encouraged.
- Provide the opportunity for every household to receive the Iowa Outdoors magazine.

### **Resource Management**

As users of our natural resources, we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the land. The purpose for management of Iowa's natural resources is to ensure that they are sustained for future generations. Research and monitoring will ensure sound science-based decision making and provide active management of land to maximize forest health, wildlife habitat, erosion control, water quality, recreation, and invasive species control. The key to conservation success is to target land management practices with willing participants in a way that optimizes multiple benefits. A healthy environment leads to a healthy economy. A healthy economy assures the long-term future interests of Iowans. Plans, such as the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan (May 2006), provide a well documented, comprehensive, and collaborative approach for the need for additional funding for resource management and provides a template for action.

- Develop a conservation easement program which will guide how land will be managed for our future generations. Iowa is a state that is largely privately owned. Conservation easements offer the opportunity to provide long term protection and capture the passion of Iowans wishing to preserve and protect our natural resources for future generations.
- Increase urban resource management programs and provide technical assistance to Iowa communities to improve the condition and care of their urban natural resources. This would include assistance to cities experiencing deer, geese, or other wildlife issues and also provide promotion of urban fishing and hunting opportunities.
- Iowa's natural resources are being constantly threatened by invasive species. New funding would allow for the expansion and coordination of a comprehensive aquatic and

terrestrial invasive species management plan which would include efforts to provide Iowa ecotype seed sources that are diverse and available to state parks, preserves, forest areas, and for buffering existing native prairies. The proactive or prevention methods are often the only way to address these new natural resource challenges that can have potentially devastating economic or environmental consequences.

- Threatened and endangered species and species of greatest conservation concern need will be targeted for additional methods outlined in the state Wildlife Action Plan.
- Efforts to improve fish habitat in lakes and streams would triple with increased funding. This would increase the number of game fish available to anglers. Stream habitat improvement measures would include reconnecting river reaches through removal of low head dams and replacement with fishing riffles, construction of bank hides and other bank stabilization techniques. In-lake habitat improvements would focus on construction of under water fishing reefs, planting and management for desirable vegetation and addition of brush piles.
- Increase urban forest management. Currently, several programs exist solely with private partners' dollars. As Iowa becomes more urban, new funding would leverage additional partners' money and help meet unfunded requests.
- Expand programs to permanently protect, restore, reconstruct and enhance areas of habitat systems that include large core tracts, watershed and greenbelt corridors, and other associated travel corridors that can be managed for biodiversity.
- In priority watersheds, fund new programs aimed at achieving improvement in water quality above selected public owned lakes, leveraging federal dollars and using grants as opportunities arise.
- New funding will greatly increase funding opportunities through leveraging of federal, state, and local financial resources. Currently, state dollars are leveraged at least on a 1:3 with federal dollars, such as the REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection) program.
- Expand the HUSH (Help Us Stop Hunger) program, where hunters donate deer to participating lockers. Lockers process the venison and the Food Bank of Iowa distributes the healthy food to needy Iowans.

### **Conservation/Recreation Infrastructure**

As public needs increase, so do facility needs, as well as field stations which are important service centers for the public. These facility needs would include:

- Complete modernization and basic improvements to the critical infrastructure needs (ie water, sewer, electrical, etc.) for regulation, safety, and accessibility compliance.
- Construction of a new fish hatchery. The need for additional fish production capabilities was identified in a 2001 independent review. This new facility will provide the capability to meet current and future fish stocking needs and improve the health and survival of stocked fish by reducing transportation time.



- Establish new and improve existing trails in forests, state parks, and selected wildlife areas. This would include partnering with local communities to identify and establish trail corridors connecting public areas to local communities.
- Restore the historical infrastructure on state parks (ie CCC structures).
- Conduct state-wide shooting sports range construction and improvement projects, which would provide the public safe and accessible facilities.
- Upgrade and modernize thirty-five field operation headquarters at priority locations across Iowa. These centers are the lifeline to providing customer service to Iowans, providing basic management of 400,000 acres of state owned/managed lands, and allowing for needed maintenance and management actions throughout the state.

**SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FUNDING VEHICLE SUMMARY**

**FUNDING VEHICLE:  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND STEWARDSHIP (IDALS)**

The Sustainable Funding Committee (SFC) Final Report completed in August 2006 sought an increase of \$30 million above current Environment First appropriation levels. Half of that increase would provide needed funding to meet existing demand for those programs. The second half would be used to provide additional technical assistance to soil and water conservation districts; develop a stream bank and buffer stabilization project; initiate a state-funded CRP-type program to keep lands in hay and grass; and startup a tillage management incentives program to assure adequate crop residue levels in areas impacted by demand for cellulosic ethanol production. The SFC Final Report also specified that certain funds would be used to support environmental stewardship with regard to agricultural and livestock issues.

**The following are areas sustainable funding will affect Iowa and Iowans through this funding vehicle:**

- Environment First. FY07 appropriations to the six IDALS Environment First programs total \$14.9 million, or approximately \$15 million. Annual demand continues to be in the range of \$25 to \$34 million. Therefore, half of the \$30 million or an additional \$15 million is needed to meet existing demand. SWCDs in most instances do not sell or promote these programs now, or seek additional applications, but rather more than exhaust available funds with the clientele that walks in the door. An increase in targeted approaches to environmental protection would most likely increase the customer base as well.
- Technical Assistance. Provide additional funds to SWCDs for technical assistance to private landowners.
- Stream bank stabilization and variable width buffers. Use watershed monitoring to pinpoint sources of pollutants and work in smaller targeted sub watersheds. Demonstrate effects, problems, and solutions.
- State-funded CRP-type program to provide incentive to keep lands in grass and allow grazing and haying within the confines of an approved management plan.
- Tillage management incentives. Target areas likely to be impacted by demand for cellulosic ethanol production. Incentivize no-till practices and leaving adequate crop residue on the field.