



When I think about all we accomplished in 2020, I am humbly filled with pride and amazement. During a time of uncertainty, we were not only able to fulfill our goals, but we were also able to form new partnerships and collaborations that ultimately propelled our mission onto a new trajectory.

Now looking back, that progress almost seems inevitable. If 2020 taught us anything, it was the relevancy of nature and its place in our everyday life. Nature was redefined from a quality of life amenity to a necessity – a necessity for friends and families to gather together safely, for people to seek comfort in a chaotic reality, to provide new adventure in our isolated worlds.

Nature has always been my home, my lifeblood. It provides a direct reflection of where I am at in my life. And while our collective relationship with nature is certainly improving, we most definitely have work left to do. We must provide increased access to outdoor recreation and nature and remove barriers so that all lowans feel at home in our natural heritage. We are stronger together; together as adventurers, advocates and stewards. As we change the

conversation around conservation, this cross-sectional approach to forming partnerships and facilitating collaboration will once again prove to unite us in our effort to improve lowa's natural spaces.

Moving forward, we will carry with us what we learned and remember all that came about in 2020. We will remember to be nimble in forming solutions as we emerge in this new reality, because sometimes you find a better path forward when you take the one less traveled. We will remember to meet people where they are and find ways to work toward a common goal and vision. And we will always remember that the work we do outlasts us all.

Thank you for your support, partnership and leadership in helping us create the world we want for our families, friends and future generations.

Hannah Inman
Chief Executive Officer









The work of the Great Outdoors Foundation has never been more promising — or necessary. Over the last year, "outside" became an almost sacred place as we began to fully realize the critical role that nature plays in our physical, mental, emotional and social health. Unfortunately, while many of us were able to escape to the great outdoors, a significant population across our state and country remained confined to their homes.

Not all lowans receive the same opportunities to benefit from nature experiences. This limited access comes in many forms:

- Physical distance from green spaces, parks and trails.
- · Lack of transportation.
- · Insufficient access to equipment and safety gear.
- · Little to no education in outdoor skills, including basics like swimming.
- · Inadequate maintenance for existing spaces.

lowans face the most altered landscape in the nation with significant erosion, air particulates, loss of trees and prairie, flooding, drought and water pollution. These challenges occur within a context of escalating climate change and polarized, complicated politics. These conditions seem to stymie progress on both resource protection/restoration and the advancements in equity needed for a resilient lowa.

The Great Outdoors Foundation earns high praise for its exceptional efforts on behalf of Central Iowa Water Trails, support of county conservation and its capacity to spark new upstream-downstream projects and partners. As we look at what's next, that same driving energy for collaboration and conservation can energize efforts in revitalization and restoration — not just for the environment but for the community.

This organization continues to adapt and develop to meet current needs as well as anticipated possibilities. Our next challenge is one that is well worth the work: the work to reconcile the past, the work to impact the present and the work to safeguard the future.

We have the opportunity to continue our partnerships for resources, education, research, programs and collaboration to nurture leadership and progress in the very necessary work of environmental justice, working until the great outdoors isn't for a select few, but for all.

See you on the trails,

Pat Boddy, Chair of the Board of Directors









Pat Boddy,

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For years, the Great Outdoors Foundation has supported Polk County Conservation (PCC) through fundraising and fiscal initiatives, and as the organization continues to evolve, our roots with PCC only grow deeper. Like the two rails of a train track, our organizations run parallel to one another, each providing a unique lens, perspective and skill set to the projects we collaborate on. We're so grateful to have allies in the community who are not only experts in their field, but also visionary in their work. In 2020, the Great Outdoors Foundation invested more than \$208,000 in Polk County Conservation programs including the Nature Pass Program, Youth Conservation Corps, water trails studies and more. For each dollar allocated, we are more than confident that our community will see a tenfold return in the years and decades to come.

NATURE PASS

Polk County Conservation again collaborated with IMPACT Community Action Partnership to provide a 50% discount on programs, services and facilities to local, income-qualified families. Twenty-three households were identified and served during the pandemic, providing access to educational programs, equipment rentals, cabins and campgrounds. The Great Outdoors Foundation is supplementing all revenue loss from the Nature Pass Program to Polk County Conservation through ongoing fundraising efforts.





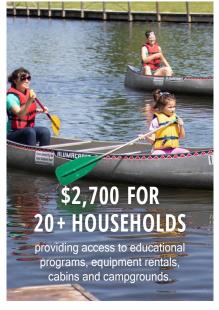


\$208,153 invested in Polk County Conservation programs.





Helping to build a future where Central lowa's youth are developed into valued workers and active environmental stewards.





4.2 MILLION

visitors sought refuge and solace in the great outdoors.

YOUTH CORPS

The mission of the Polk County Conservation Youth Corps is to engage and inspire diverse youth through hands-on environmental stewardship projects, outdoor recreation, and conservation education. Through financial support, the Great Outdoors Foundation is helping to build a future where Central lowa's youth are developed into valued workers and active environmental stewards while receiving competitive compensation. The program has more than doubled since 2017 and boasts alumni from more than 30 different schools, providing workforce development for emerging talent. In 2020, this program was also a valuable outlet for teenagers to socialize safely while growing as individuals. It spans socio-economic and demographic backgrounds, with youth from all reaches of the county participating and eager to serve community conservation efforts.

PARK USAGE

It's no surprise that recreation usage was up astronomically in 2020. Many of us sought refuge and solace in the great outdoors, and recreators in Central lowa were no different. Through continued fundraising support, the Great Outdoors Foundation was able to contribute to the stewardship, maintenance and preservation of Jester Park, Easter Lake Park and Brown's Woods. In all, Polk County's parks saw more than 4.2 million visitors in 2020.





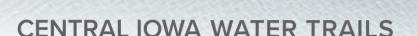












\$5.5 M

RAISED IN 2020

\$125,000

OUR TOWN GRANT

CINT CAPITAL CAMPAIG

\$22.5

MILLION

SPRING 2021

In a year where time seemed to almost stand still, Central Iowa Water Trails (CIWT) forged ahead at an extraordinary pace. From the opening of two regional sites to the launch of the project's branding process, we saw advancements in all areas of the initiative. In January of 2020, just before the start of the pandemic, Maggie McClelland assumed her new role as Central Iowa Water Trails Project Manager and became the first full-time staffer dedicated to CIWT.

Despite undergoing one of the most collectively challenging years on record, the project forged ahead, leveraging committee and board members from across the region via Zoom. By the first quarter of 2021, the capital campaign had generated roughly \$22.5 million – \$5.5 of which was raised last year alone. Additionally, Shoreline Signals, the public art component of Central Iowa Water Trails, received a \$125,000 National Endowment for the Arts "Our Town" grant to facilitate and implement public art installments that coincide with the project.

From a construction perspective, more than half of the design phase for the federal BUILD Grant sites was completed thanks to our partners from the City of Des Moines and Polk County. Additionally, plans for a new Central Iowa Water Trails governance structure were established. This project has been, and continues to be, a collaborative effort across multiple organizations; Capital Crossroads, Catch Des Moines, Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, Greater Des Moines Area MPO, Great Outdoors Foundation and the Greater Des Moines Partnership.















GOLF OUTING

Despite obvious COVID-19 restrictions and a rainout on our original date, we were determined to *safely* host our Annual Golf Outing. We finally had 28 foursomes play in the chilly fall weather on Friday, October 16, 2020. These staunch supporters raised nearly \$10,000 for Central Iowa Water Trails and had fun while doing so! We look forward to gathering again this year for our 10th Annual Golf Outing on Monday, September 13, 2021.

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ANNUAL DINNER RE-IMAGINED

Like many organizations, we made a change of plans when it became evident that we would not be able to host our Annual Dinner in person. Knowing that the outdoors would be a safe haven for many during the pandemic, we developed a seasonal subscription box program featuring local swag, sponsored products and outdoor gear. Each subscription box included a list of nearby parks and amenities that participants could visit and provided an inventory of suggested activities to prompt new adventures outside. The seasonal subscription boxes allowed us to engage with our grassroots supporters and enabled us to provide further education, access and resources for Central lowans recreating in our area.

SEED BALL KITS

Along with the seasonal subscription box program, we also provided a new resource for Great Outdoors
Foundation supporters to engage with nature at home. In the spring of 2020, we offered individual seed ball kits for purchase. These kits were distributed as a part of our Earth Day initiative and contained local varieties including Little Bluestem, Big Bluestem, Indian Grass, Stiff Goldenrod, Round-headed Bush Clover, Yellow Coneflower, Cinquefoil, Saw-Tooth Sunflower, Switch Grass, Canada Wild Rye and Rough Drop Seed. Participants were encouraged to plant these in their own backyards or at one of the identified Polk County Conservation parks.

THANK YOU!



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