



ANNUAL
REPORT

2020

BETTER PATH FORWARD

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 Iowans 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 Iowa'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



GREAT OUTDOORS FOR ALL

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 Iowans 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.

Iowans 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 Iowa.

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

GREAT
OUTDOORS
FOUNDATION



OUR PURPOSE

The Great Outdoors Foundation is Central Iowa's pathway to sustainable, healthy environments.

We are a regional conservation leader and a catalyst for high impact environmental projects. We convene partners with a shared vision, drive collaboration and raise funds and awareness. Our priority initiatives expand and restore natural spaces, foster outdoor recreation, promote conservation and build passion for nature.

We connect people of all ages and backgrounds to nature by collaborating with other organizations who share a common vision of healthy environments that provide a variety of outdoor recreation and education opportunities.



OUR VISION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pat Boddy,
Chair of the Board of Directors

Joseph Corfits Jr.

Chris Costa

Tara Deering-Hansen

Matthew Marckmann

Chris McCarthy

Kurt Mumm

Tom Newton

Cory Sharp

Joey Taylor-Moon

Rachel Woodhouse

Jill Altringer,
Polk County Conservation Board Liaison

EMERITUS BOARD MEMBERS

Dan Cornelison, *President*

Elizabeth Cox

Helen Eddy

Lori Geadelmann

Wayne Graham

Jim Hubbell

Bob Jester

Joy Johnson

Mike LaMair

Carole Reichardt

Davis Sanders

Bethany Wilcoxon

STAFF

Hannah Inman,
Chief Executive Officer

Jen Cross,
Vice President of Donor Relations

Maggie McClelland,
*Central Iowa Water Trails
Project Manager*

Kathy Giles,
Senior Coordinator

Kaitie Hartmann,
Marketing Coordinator



2020 PROGRAMMING



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.

**8,175 HRS
WORKED**

**58 YOUTH CORPS
PARTICIPANTS**

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

**\$2,700 FOR
20+ HOUSEHOLDS**

providing access to educational
programs, equipment rentals,
cabins and campgrounds.

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 Iowa'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 Iowa 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.





CENTRAL IOWA WATER TRAILS

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.*



2020 EVENTS

GOLF
OUTING
\$9,000+
RAISED

25+
FOURSOMES

ANNUAL
DINNER
\$14,000+
RAISED

100
SUBSCRIPTIONS

SEED BALL
KITS
\$1,300+
RAISED

88
KITS

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.



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 Iowans 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!



GOF/PCC/CIWT 2020 DONORS

Adam Kiel
Al & Jody Belinsky
Alissa Sarno
Allison & Jim Fleming
Amanda Jensen
Amber Marie-Osborn
Amy Johnson
Andrea & Grant Woodard
Andrew Lambert
Ann Feilmann
Ann Ketch
Anne Schulte
Anthony & Lisa Horsch
Arnie Ripperger
Atul Gupta
Ben & Rachel McLean
Ben Ramsay
Benjamin Peterson
Betsy Richey
Bob Riley Jr.
Brad West
Brandi Dahl
Brandon Young
Brenda Bartels
Brian Fliehler
Brian Kampling
Brooke Stewart
Bruce Bernard
Candy Morgan
Carl & Susan Voss
Carrie Mears
Carrie Scheidel
Chasity Ballew
Chris & Breanne Costa
Christ Naumann
Community Foundation of
Greater Des Moines
Connie Wimer
Cory W. Sharp
Craig Duckworth
Cushman & Wakefield
Dan & Joanie Houston
Dan & Alysia Fullerton
Dan Cornelison

Daniel Bohner
David & Bonnie Dickson
Dennis Sharp
Diane McGuire
Diane Moore
Douglas & Deana Romig
EMC Insurance Company
Emelie Cross
Emily Barske
Erin Sandivg
Erin Wickering
Eva Marquez
Frank Cownie
Fred & Charlotte Hubbell
Frederick V. Buie
Gabus Family Foundation
Gartner Family Foundation
Gena Johnson
Gerry Neugent
Gilcrest/Jewett Lumber Company
Greg E. Edwards
GuideOne
Gunnar Olson
H. Harshbarger
HDR, Inc.
Heather Imoehl
Holly & John Raibikis
Hubbell Realty Company
Ian & Danielle Lin
Intelligent Solutions Group
Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
Iowa Family Chiropractic
Iowa Whitewater Coalition
ISG Inc.
ITA Group Foundation
Jack Mosher
Jacqueline Johnson
James & Deborah Miller
James Oakes
Jamie Stringer
Jamie Teff
Jan Stump
Janet & David Riley
Jay Byers
Jenna Knox
Jerry Cave
Jessica Ochoa

Jester Insurance Services Inc.
Jill Wilkins
Joey Taylor-Moon
Johanna Boots
John Deere Des Moines Works
John Morrissey
John Ruan Foundation Trust
John Schreurs
Jon & Cherie Rissman
Joseph & Sheryl Corfits Jr.
Joseph Carr
Joshua Faber
Julie Hoskins
Karen Clayton
Karen Swalwell
Karen Thompson
Kathleen Koeppl
Kathy Johnson
Kathy Leggett
Kathy Shannon
Katie Wittry
Kay Gwinn
KC & Jeri McGinnis
Keaton & Scott Pulver
Keaton Krueger
Kelly Sheldon O'Byrne
Kelly Sparks
Kelsey Jacobs
Kemin Industries
Kevin & Lori Howe
Kevin P. Edwards
Kim Olofson & Annette Shaw
Klaire Madden
Knapp Properties
Kristi & Lauren Knous
Kristy Willett
Kye & Jen Cross
Lauren Steenhoek
Lauren Wheeler
Linda Goff
Linda M. Lighthall
Linda Pixley
Lindsay Black
Lonie Fisher
Lyndsay Sayre
Malori Thornton
Mark Movic

Mark R. Johnson
Martha McCormick
Mary Ann Beard
Mary Jo & Steve Franklin
Mary Katherine Harrington
Mary Lawyer
Mary Rodish-Rhiner
Mason, Elise & Ivy Del Val
Matt Nuetzman
Matthew & Wendy Marckmann
Melissa Gillespie
Melissa Kiefer
Melissa Pote
Mercy Medical Center
Meredith Crenshaw
Michelle & Justin Rice
Michelle Garanson
Mike & Bobbi Jo Zeller
Mike & Kristi Reck
Mike Rowley
Morgan Stanley Foundation
MPO
Nancy DeVinay
Nikki Syverson
Nissa Maddalone
Patricia Boddy & Robert Davis
Patricia Weidner-Oeth
Patrick Grace
Patty & Jim Cownie Charitable Fund
Paul Schilling
Paul Wray
Pete Nadolny
Principal Financial Group
Rachel Woodhouse
Ray Gustafson
RDG Planning & Design
Rebecca Ketelsen
Renee, John & Loui McPhee
Rhannon Parson
Rich Leopold
Richard & Elise Mull
Richard & Joyce Chapman
Richard Deming
Rick Tollakson
Robert Dillard
Sally Sonnenburg
Sam Carrell

Sarah Tartar, PhD
Scheels All Sports
Sean Severe
Shannon Smith
Shaun Ahern
Shive Hattery
Snyder & Associates, Inc.
Stacey Hilsenbeck
Staci Williams
Steve & Melissa Chapman
Steve Thompson
Sue Thompson
Suku & Mary Radia
Sumner & Karen Worth
Susan Bachman
Susan Judkins Josten
Susan Sibbersen
Swart Family Foundation
Tara Deering-Hansen
Teresa Jensen
Tessa Fjelland
Thaddeus W. Franklin
The Gold Coin Foundation

Tiffany & Mark Tauscheck
Tiffany Sedlacek
Tim and Toni Urban
Tim McElligott
Timothy Carrell
Tina Hoffman
Tom & Wendy Levis
Tom and Becky Newton
Tom Mahoney
Tracey R. Andrews
Tracy Ahl
Trudy Holman Hurd
Union Pacific Foundation
United Way
UnityPoint Health - Des Moines
Vern & Karen Seidl
Vicki Brook
W.T. & Edna M. Dahl Trust
Weitz
West Bancorporation Foundation
William C. Knapp
William C. Knapp Charitable Foundation
Wittern Family Charitable Foundation





www.greatoutdoorsfoundation.org



501 SW 7th Street, Suite G
Des Moines, IA 50309
(515) 452-0022

