



2025

ANNUAL REPORT



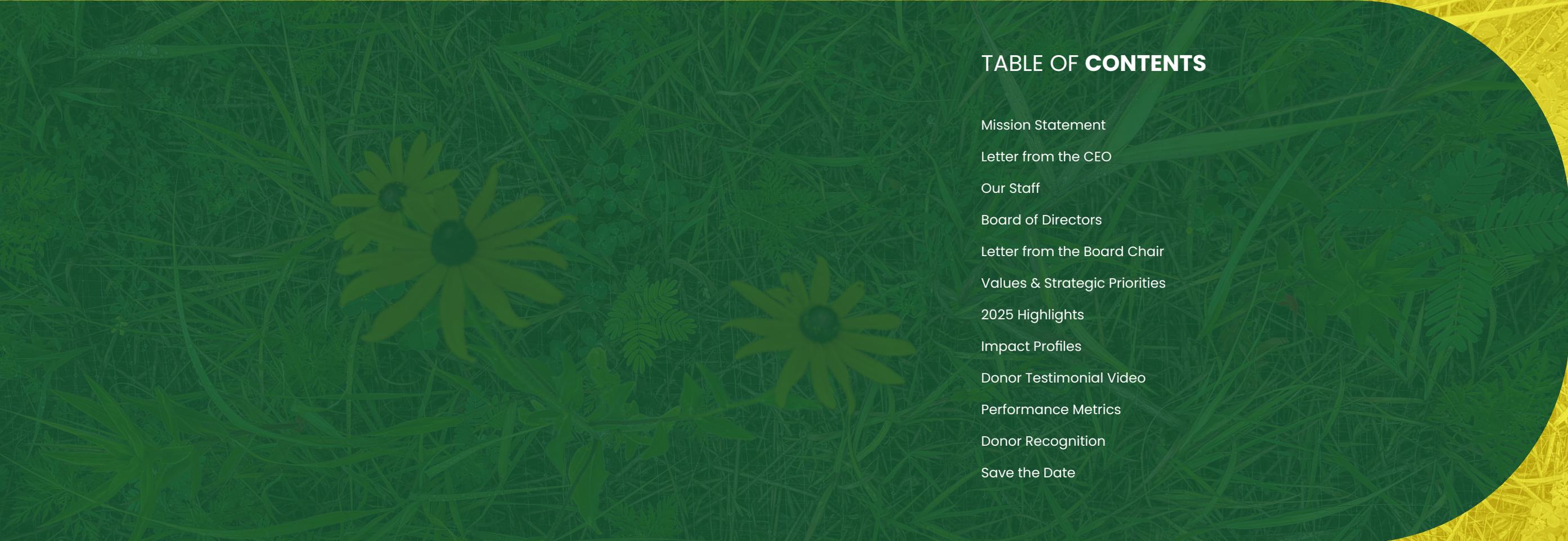


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement

Letter from the CEO

Our Staff

Board of Directors

Letter from the Board Chair

Values & Strategic Priorities

2025 Highlights

Impact Profiles

Donor Testimonial Video

Performance Metrics

Donor Recognition

Save the Date

MISSION STATEMENT

ADVANCE **CONSERVATION**
THROUGH **INNOVATION,**
COLLABORATION, AND
STEWARDSHIP.





LETTER FROM THE CEO

As I was thinking about what I wanted to share with you in this year's letter, I was met with a bit of a challenge. It's no surprise to say that the tenor and tone around water quality this past year is in stark contrast to the usually positive nature of an Annual Report. There is much to celebrate, and still, we know there is so much left to do. It's in these seeming dichotomies that the Great Outdoors Foundation continues to thrive. We don't see this as an either/or but as yes/and.

In 2025, water quality was front of mind for just about everyone in Iowa. In the background of reduced public funding and concerning data, we had a water usage ban in our region, highlighting that water quality can be water scarcity. All of this can leave one feeling less than optimistic.

Several years ago, before we could have anticipated the circumstances we're discussing today, we at the Great Outdoors Foundation launched the Conservation Acceleration Fund (CAF). I'm thrilled to share that to date, the CAF has yielded:

- More than \$51 million unlocked for conservation practices.
- More than 100 water quality projects activated across the state.
- More than 24 million pounds of lifetime nitrate mitigated from our waterways.

This is only the beginning, but it gives me hope about the future of water quality. Not just in Iowa, but in the entire Mississippi River Watershed. All eyes are on us, and it's time to rise to the occasion.

Last year marked the 30th anniversary of the Great Outdoors Foundation (GOF). We've taken various strategies to advancing our mission over the last three decades, and naturally, as we stand at the crossroads of GOF's history and future, we're asking ourselves: what's next?

The Great Outdoors Foundation has acted as a convener throughout its existence. We don't have all of the answers, resources, or capacity, but we can certainly act as a connector for those who do. Urban and rural. Upstream and

downstream. Right and left. Ag and conservation. It will take radical collaboration to move the needle on water quality at the pace and scope that these circumstances demand. And we're ready for the challenge.

In the year ahead, you'll see our focus on this exact model of conservation, bringing all parties to the table to enact solutions where they're needed:

- Athene Watershed26 will bring together a wide spectrum of partners tackling water quality at the intersection of agriculture and conservation.
- A new on-ramp program will provide technical assistance and resourcing to conservation agronomists implementing conservation through the co-op network.
- Investments from the Conservation Acceleration Fund will be used to provide gap funding for high-impact projects.

- Alternative conservation financing will deliver the patient capital needed to fund practices at scale.
- The Happy Disruptors Podcast will uplift and amplify the voices of expert partners, implementing creative and innovative strategies in their respective sectors.

The Great Outdoors Foundation will continue to operate in this space that is both practical and optimistic. Determined and celebratory. High expectations and high hopes. The challenge ahead of us demands all that we have, and we want you to know we're giving it everything we've got — including relentless positivity. We're inviting you to do the same.

Thank you for your unwavering support,

Hannah Inman

CEO, Great Outdoors Foundation



MELISSA CAMPBELL
Senior Project Manager



JEN CROSS
VP of Strategic Partnerships



SARA CARMICHAEL
Project Manager



HANNAH DAKE
Marketing & Comms Specialist



MICHELLE FLATTERY
Director of Operations



KAITIE HARTMANN
Director of Marketing



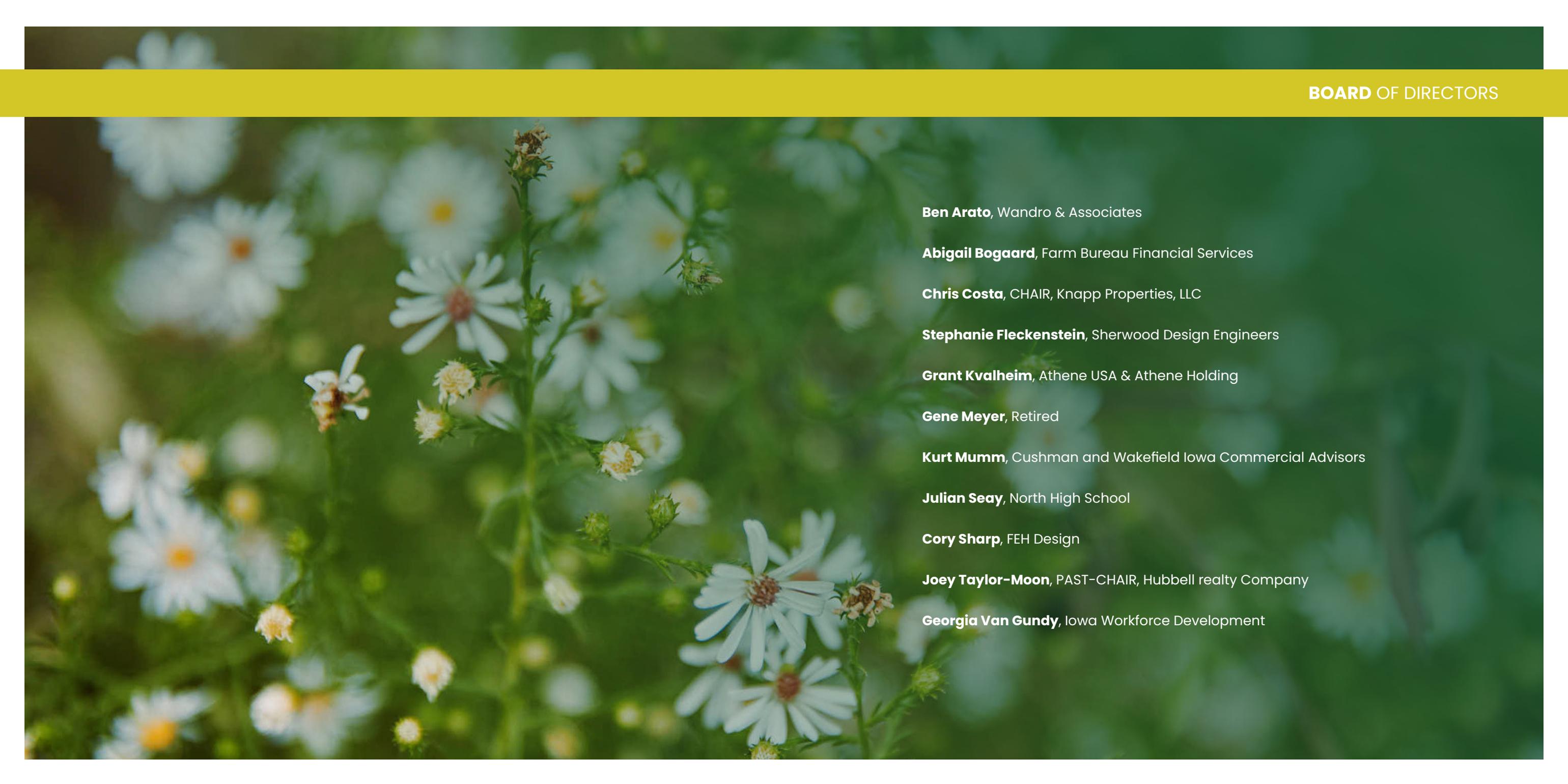
HANNAH INMAN
CEO



MAKALA MCGREAN
Database & Grants Specialist



JAKE MORRIS
Operations Specialist



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Abigail Bogaard, Farm Bureau Financial Services

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Stephanie Fleckenstein, Sherwood Design Engineers

Grant Kvalheim, Athene USA & Athene Holding

Gene Meyer, Retired

Kurt Mumm, Cushman and Wakefield Iowa Commercial Advisors

Julian Seay, North High School

Cory Sharp, FEH Design

Joey Taylor-Moon, PAST-CHAIR, Hubbell realty Company

Georgia Van Gundy, Iowa Workforce Development

LETTER FROM THE **BOARD CHAIR**

My advice to anyone wanting to get involved in the nonprofit sector is always this: choose something you care about. Funnily enough, I didn't quite take my own advice when I joined the Great Outdoors Foundation Board in January of 2020. At that time, my rationale for signing on had almost nothing to do with the mission, and almost everything to do with owing a favor to my friend, Joe Corfits.

My basic assessment of the organization was that it was essentially a pheasant hunter's group — and that's not entirely wrong, just mostly wrong. There were many pheasant hunters who led the volunteer-run organization in its early days, including Joe, but that's about where the similarities start and end. When I look around at our Board of Directors now, it's comprised of very few "traditional" conservationists. Instead, we're an assorted bunch, each with his or her own motivation for involvement, but unified in our mission.

What I have come to learn over the last five years is that regardless of shape or

form, the Great Outdoors Foundation — staff, volunteers, donors — is laser-focused on advancing conservation. I proudly consider myself a part of that group, which also includes all of you.

There is a tremendous need for entities, like the Great Outdoors Foundation, to engage in creative problem-solving, addressing critical conservation issues like water quality. We are but one organization in an entire ecosystem of incredible agencies and NGOs, and each one plays a vital role in developing the solution.

It's a growing coalition that includes some of the expected players, and a whole lot of unlikely partners. I'm glad that's the case, because with the challenges we're up against, we need more leaders at the table, not less. At a time when the task at hand seems beyond our capabilities, we have to look past ourselves and maximize our impact through partnership and cooperation. That means extending an invitation to all who are willing to participate in our shared vision.

When I reflect on the last year, what I'm most proud of is the Great Outdoors Foundation's relentless commitment to its original mission. Yes, the one espoused in 1995. Here's just a taste: "To do any and all acts to bring about the conservation of natural resources, the enhancement of outdoor recreation opportunities, wise land use, conservation education, protection of open spaces, and the promotion of environmental ethics." In other words, whatever is earthly possible.

The Board has updated that language slightly: "To advance conservation through innovation, collaboration, and stewardship." It's a cause I care very deeply about, pheasants or not. I'm grateful that you do as well.

Many thanks,



Chris Costa

President & CEO, Knapp Properties, LLC

VALUES

INNOVATION

We unlock creative solutions to create generational environmental impact.

COLLABORATION

We partner across the aisle and develop apolitical allies to get the job done.

STEWARDSHIP

We punch above our weight class, solving big issues with finite resources.

EXCELLENCE

We are optimistic with a “never settle” attitude.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

TRANSFORM Iowa into an innovative water quality leader.

UNDERSTAND and master the business model for conservation.

DEVELOP the Great Outdoors Foundation as long-term, viable organization that can **ACT** as a best-in-class thought leader within the conservation space.

UTILIZE recreation as a catalyst for conservation.

ESTABLISH the Great Outdoors Foundation as an innovator in the nonprofit sector.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY

The Great Outdoors Foundation's Conservation Acceleration Fund receives the Innovation Leadership Best Development Award from 1000 Friends of Iowa.

FEBRUARY

Members of the Great Outdoors Foundation team travel to Denver to meet with partners from the NGO and finance sector to incubate conservation finance solutions.

MARCH

Donors, partners, and volunteers join staff for an open house at the new Great Outdoors Foundation office.

APRIL

Great Outdoors Foundation staff connect with elected officials and staffers at the Capitol, highlighting impactful public-private partnerships.

MAY

Partners gather at a dedication ceremony for the Creekview Wetland, one of the first projects to receive funding through the Conservation Acceleration Fund.

JUNE

Close friends of the Great Outdoors Foundation gather for a Birthday Breakfast & Site Tour to celebrate the organization's 30th Anniversary.

The Happy Disruptors Podcast launches, welcoming guests from various sectors to share in conversations covering conservation and other high-impact topics.

July

The Great Outdoors Foundation is recognized with the innovationIOWA innovationLEADER Award for the Conservation Acceleration Fund, the second nonprofit ever to receive the honor.

AUGUST

The Annual Golf Outing raises more than \$33,000 in support of conservation, with a record 31 foursomes registered to play.

Jen Cross, VP of Strategic Partnerships, speaks on a panel at the Soil and Water Conservation Society International Annual Conference regarding maximizing private investments in water quality.

SEPTEMBER

Hannah Inman, CEO, speaks on a panel at the Iowa Water Conference regarding water quality, utilities, and data centers.

Jen Cross, VP of Strategic Partnerships, contributes to a panel at the Greater Des Moines Partnership's Regional Summit covering water quality and public-private partnerships.

OCTOBER

A record-breaking Wild Prairie Showdown raises nearly \$190,000 for conservation and recreation, including support for ICON Water Trails. The sold-out event had more than 400 people in attendance.

At the event, the Great Outdoors Foundation announces Watershed26, a cross-sector summit focused on advancing water quality efforts at the intersection of agriculture and conservation. The two-day conference will be held June 30 & July 1, 2026.

NOVEMBER

The Great Outdoors Foundation is notified that it has been selected as the subject of a mini-documentary which will cover conservation and agriculture and air on public television in 2026.

DECEMBER

Donors, partners, and volunteers join the Great Outdoors Foundation for its annual Holiday Breakfast. Together, the group celebrates advances made for conservation over the past year.



MAXIMIZING PARTNERSHIPS

From its inception, the Conservation Acceleration Fund (CAF) has demonstrated the potent impact of public-private partnerships. The Creekview Wetland is an exemplary model of the dynamic capital stacking needed to advance innovative conservation solutions. Located in Ankeny, Iowa, the wetland was one of the first projects completed with CAF dollars, uniting city, county, state and private industry partners. One of the largest stormwater wetlands in Iowa, it treats 500 acres of residential and commercial development runoff, supporting floodwater management and increasing area biodiversity.



DISRUPTING THE NARRATIVE

The Happy Disruptors Podcast (THDP), a new endeavor from the Great Outdoors Foundation (GOF), made possible by Amplified, celebrates those taking an unconventional approach to their industry – conservation or otherwise. Conversations vary from GOF Board Members to finance experts, conservation professionals to farmers and landowners. THDP allows GOF to elevate the work of its partners and dig into the nuances required to enact change in an interconnected world. In the words of one THDP guest, Ruth McCabe, Senior Conservation Manager at Heartland Co-Op, “The only way to figure this stuff out is to dive into the deep end and swim to the other side.”





RETURNING TO OUR ROOTS

Thirty years ago, when the Great Outdoors Foundation (GOF) was founded, its primary role was to support the work of Polk County Conservation (PCC) through grassroots fundraising. As the mission and scale of GOF has grown and evolved, its relationship with PCC has remained foundational, if no longer its sole objective. With new opportunities on the horizon and a growing support base, GOF and PCC are now iterating a new partnership through the incubation of the Conservation Foundation of Polk County (CFPC). This new nonprofit entity will once again provide PCC with exclusive fundraising efforts, soliciting programmatic support for its highly desirable activities, parks, and amenities. "To be here, nine years later, getting to start a new initiative because [the Great Outdoors Foundation] has grown so much, it is really special," Cory Sharp, former GOF Board Member and newly appointed CFPC Board Chair, said.

IMPACT PROFILES



CELEBRATING A CREATIVE CONSERVATIONIST

The Creative Conservationist award recognizes those taking extraordinary measures to advance conservation. At the 2025 Wild Prairie Showdown, John Swanson, Water Resources Supervisor for Polk County, was presented with this honor for his work shaping the future of water quality across the state. Swanson, who is responsible for the creation of Polk County's Batch & Build program, has facilitated more than 200 water quality projects and treated upwards of 6,000 acres across Iowa. "There's a lot of negativity in this space — but there's also a lot of positivity. We can make a difference. We've seen adoption increase ten-fold, and we could not do this without funding sources like the Conservation Acceleration Fund," Swanson said.



BRIDGING URBAN & RURAL

Meet Nick Helland and Lee Tesdell, two Iowa farmers working together to advance conservation agriculture. Business partners on a farm in Slater, Iowa, they've implemented practices like no-till fields, prairie strips, alternative grains, and cover crops. They frequently invite groups to the farm — including the Great Outdoors Foundation's Birthday Breakfast & Site Tour, showcasing the possibilities and benefits of farming with conservation embedded in the bottom line. While Nick and Lee differ in their perspectives on conservation, they are in firm agreement that progress will require everyone at the table. "Pointing fingers is counterproductive. Urban and rural partners are now working together to successfully complete projects, proving how and why we should join forces instead of sticking to outdated antagonistic views," Helland said.

BUILDING A DIVERSE COALITION

For thirty years, the Great Outdoors Foundation has been building a diverse coalition of support, often with unconventional partners representing varying — sometimes seemingly contradictory — perspectives. Challenges to conservation are more complex than ever, thus requiring sophisticated, cross-sector solutions. Whether you've been a part of our work from the very beginning or you're just getting acquainted with us now, there's a place for you under the tent. With more than \$250 million activated for conservation to date, we're making an impact — but we're just getting started.



“There’s a lot of things that frankly wouldn’t happen without philanthropy. My definition is, it’s a part of your life; it’s a part of your mindset.”

JOE CORFITS

Donor and former Great Outdoors Foundation Board Member

Scan the QR code to watch Joe’s full testimonial.



CONSERVATION ACCELERATION FUND

\$9M+

IN PRIVATE FUNDING
SECURED TO DATE

61K+

DRAINAGE ACRES
CAPTURED TO DATE

24M+

POUNDS OF LIFETIME
MITIGATED NITRATE

\$51M+

IN PRIVATE FUNDING
LEVERAGED TO DATE

8:1

AVERAGE PUBLIC
PRIVATE MATCH

100+

WATER QUALITY PROJECTS
ACTIVATED TO DATE



DONOR RECOGNITION

Aaron Peterson	Bell's Brewery	Christopher Vaughn	Don Vaske	Hannah & Mike Inman	Johnny Alcivar
Aaron Wilson	Benjamin Godar	City of Polk City	Donald Wall	Hansen Company, Inc.	Jon & Joan Kallen
Abigail & Travis Bogaard	Bethany Wilcoxon	Clint & Anne Powell	Douglas & Deana Romig	HDR, Inc.	Joseph Leo
Adriel Lage	Betts Foundation	Clint Sloss	Douglas Ostrich	Heidi Whitver	Josephs Jewelers
Aftin Nashert	Bill Rubis	CoBank	Drew Miller	Henry Hanson	Josh Mandelbaum
Afton Holt	Billi Hunt	Cody Bullock	Dylan Mullenix	HR Green, Inc.	Joshua & Elizabeth Nielsen
Ailen Barrientos	Blythe Whiting	Collin Barnes	EMC Insurance Companies	Hubbell Realty Company	Joyce & Richard Chapman
Alex Johnson	Bolton & Menk	Community State Bank	Emily & Mason Kessinger	IMEG Corp	Julia Helm
Allison & Jim Fleming	Brad Pfaltzgraff	Connor Shipley	Emily Williams-Bouska	ISG Inc.	Julie Lasche Brown
Alvedin Buljubasic	Brandy Wilson	Cornerpost Marketing	Eric Woolson	Jacob Lundgren	Kahlea Walters
Amelia Klatt	Brent Mitchell	Cornerstone Government Affairs, Inc.	Erin Nettelund-Sandvig	Jacobsen & Company, LLP	Karen King
Amy Haase	Brian Maro	Cory & Abby Sharp	Estes Construction	James Henderson	Karen Novak Swalwell
Andrew & Sarah Susanin	Brittain Electric	Cory McAnelly	FEH Design	Jason Uhlenhake	Kari Boyens
Andrew Seymour	BrownWinick Law Firm	Craig Owens	Flix Brewery- Des Moines	Jay Ahlrichs	Kari Stecher
Andrew Snyder	Bruce Bernard & Arlene Dabill	Creighton Cox	Frank Maher	Jay Freiermuth	Kasey Clary
Angie Fagervik-Chia	Bullock Electric	Cristina Rodriguez	Frank Vlossak IV	JD Anderson	Kate Compton
Angie Stepsis	Businessolver	Cushman & Wakefield	Fred & Charlotte Hubbell	Jeff & Emily Naylor	Kate Gainer
Angie Tessau	Candace & Jonathan Koester	Daniel & Dee Cornelison	Gabriel Nelson	Jeff & Louisa Perry	Katherine Stoff
Anna Minner	Carlos Tenesaca	Daniel Bohner	Gene & Kathleen Meyer	Jen & Kye Cross	Kathryn Kunert
Anthony Colosimo	Carrie Johnson	David Maier	Georgia Van Gundy & Chad Kleppe	Jennifer Riggs	Katie Patton
Arnie Ripperger	Carrie Kruse	David Powers	Google	Jennings Kallen Advisors	Kelsey Hanson
Ashley & Brian Aust	Carter Lane	Dawn Taylor	Grant Kvalheim	Jesse Bunney	Kerri Sorrell
Athene Charitable Foundation	Catch Des Moines - Greater Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau	Dean Snyder Construction	Grant Taylor	Jester Park Golf Course	Kim Carmichael
Athletic Brewing	Celia & Tom Mahoney	Deanna Jackson	Greater Des Moines Partnership	Jill Conner Lippincott	Kirsten Davis
Aureon	Chad Heinzl	Derek Lord	GreenState Credit Union	Jodi & Matt Connolly	Knapp Properties
Bailey Hawn	Cheltzie Miller-Bailey	Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization	Gregory and Sharon Chlebicki	Joe & Sheri Corfits	Korey Birkenholtz
Baker Group	Chris & Breanne Costa	Diana Wright	Halid Obic	Joel Greenberg	Kristie Bell
Becky Popp			Hank & Melissa Norem	John & Julie Schreurs	Kristin Emery

DONOR RECOGNITION

Kristin Tentinger

Kurt Mumm

Kyle and Sharon Krause Family Foundation

Lacy Miles

Laura Meeker

Laurie & Peter Sloterdijk

LeAnn Williamsen

Lenny Ferrigno

Linda Dawe

Linda Rullan

Lindsay VanZee

Lisa Wieland

Lori Calhoun

Lytle Family Trust

Marc Hollander

Mark Carlson

Mark Land

Matt & Wendy Marckmann

Matt McKinney

Matt Nolan

Matt Sexton

McClure

Meagan Archer

Melissa Ness

Merrick & Company

Meta

Michael Joyce

Michael Swesey

Michele Farrell

Michelle Flattery

Micky Eberth

Microsoft

MidAmerican Energy

Mike & Kristi Reck

Monica & Brandon Converse

Morgan Stanley Foundation

Nate Byro

Nationwide Insurance Company

NCP, Inc.

Nelda Sampel

Nyemaster Goode, P.C.

Olsson

OpenLoop

Paige Peterson

Pamela Burmeister

Pat Boddy & Robert Davis

Patrick & Susan Lang

Paxton Bennett

Peg Armstrong

Philip Gates

Plato Hieronimus

Polk County Board of Supervisors

Polk County Conservation

Principal Foundation

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Rachel Blagg

Rachel Flint

Rachel Wacker

Ray Gustafson

RDG Planning & Design

Reilly Construction

Renaë Mauk

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Tyler Conley

Tyler Dingel

Union Pacific Foundation

United Contractors

UnityPoint Health – Des Moines

US Bank

Valerie Heath

Vermeer Charitable Foundation

Vern & Karen Seidl

VisionBank

Walton Family Foundation

Wells Fargo Foundation

Whylie Massey

Wildflower

Williams & Jensen

Wittmack Law Firm

Zach Hall

SAVE THE DATE

TUESDAY, JUNE 30

Athene Watershed26

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1

Athene Watershed26

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26

Annual Golf Outing

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

Holiday Breakfast

WHATEVER
IS EARTHLY
POSSIBLE.▲



Great Outdoors Foundation
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West Des Moines, IA 50266