



FY 22

ANNUAL REPORT



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At A Glance

Connecting people with nature and improving natural resources—making Story County a great place to live, work, and recreate.

EDUCATION/OUTREACH

- Hundreds of programs for schools, the public, and private groups each year
- Programs for tots to seniors
- In all Story County school districts
- Named **Best Environmental Education Program** in Iowa
- Active community engagement through a robust volunteer program
- *Prairie Horizons* newsletters distributed quarterly
- Strong social media engagement

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- 3,400+ acres under management
- 2,100+ acres public hunting
- 89 miles of trails including South Skunk River Water Trail
- Campgrounds, lakes, picnic areas, meeting spaces, playgrounds, and more

NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER QUALITY

- Countywide programs implementing natural resources and water quality improvements
- Multi-jurisdictional initiatives
- Private landowner initiatives

INTEGRATED ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (IRVM)

- Conservation-focused right-of-way and drainage ditch maintenance
- 63 miles of drainage ditch management
- Roadway park and prairie management

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

- Hickory Grove Park Lake restoration
- Dakins Lake primitive campground improvements
- Hickory Grove Park signage updates
- Anderson Access streambank stabilization
- West Peterson Park beach improvements
- Habitat restoration at multiple properties

CURRENT PROJECTS

- Water quality monitoring programs
- Heart of Iowa Nature Trail wayfinding signs and information kiosks
- Edge of field water quality projects
- South Skunk River streambank stabilization

UPCOMING PROJECTS

- Oxbow restorations on the South Skunk River
- Hannum's Mill Dam mitigation
- Dakins Lake cabin
- Hickory Grove Park walleye rearing pond
- Hickory Grove Park sewer replacement
- US Army Corps of Engineers land acquisition
- McFarland Lake renovation
- Heart of Iowa Nature Trail paving



INTRODUCTION

Story County Conservation has long been recognized for its environmental education efforts and its park and natural areas. We are very happy to be able to offer these to the communities we serve and our visitors. We are also happy to be able to offer expanded services countywide - such as water quality initiatives and natural resources analysis. Our mission - ***Connecting people with nature and improving our natural resources - making Story County a great place to live, work, and recreate***, guides us to offer a wide variety of services which improve the environment and the quality of life in Story County. After many years of working on water quality efforts, this year we enabled our efforts more by hiring a watershed coordinator. This is allowing us to have more impactful efforts in water quality. We also completed a multi-year assessment of environmentally significant areas in the county. These tools will undoubtedly help us meet our mission. But tools alone can not accomplish our goals. The success of our programs is directly related to our volunteers and supporters who help give our efforts wings. Together, we will continue to connect people with nature and improve our natural resources.

If you are a current supporter, we thank you for providing opportunities for people to engage with nature. If not, we hope you will join our network of sustainers who are are critical to nature in Story County.



Mike Cox
Director, Story County Conservation



Christine Laumer
Chair, Story County Conservation Board



BOARD AND STAFF

Story County Board of Supervisors

Linda Murken (2019-2022)
 Lisa Heddens (2019-2022)
 Latifah Faisal (2021-2024)

Story County Conservation Board

Ted Tedesco (2009-2023) Dr. Nancy Franz (2015-2024)
 Dr. Jim Pease (2011-2025) Christine Laumer (2017-2026)
 Craig Meyers (2013-2022) Linda Murken, ex-officio (2019-2022)

Story County Conservation Staff

Administration

Mike Cox, Director
 Marianne Harrelson, Financial Data Manager
 Brittany Ridgway, Administrative Assistant

Field Operations

Sara Carmichael, Watershed Coordinator
 Brandon Clough, Natural Resource Specialist
 Russ DeWall, Operations Supervisor
 Luke Fielmeier, Park Ranger (July 2021 to Sept. 2021)
 Logan Heissel, Park Ranger (Feb. 2022 to current)
 Joe Hill, Conservation Technician II (July 2021 to Feb. 2022)
 Kallie Judson, Conservation Technician I (Apr. 2022 to current)
 Max McCarty, Conservation Technician I (Mar. 2022 to current)
 Dillon Schmidt, Conservation Technician II
 Derek Seward, Trails/Natural Resource Technician
 Pat Shehan, Special Projects Ranger
 Danny Simcox, Park Ranger (July 2021 to Aug. 2021)
 Hunter Simmons, Conservation Technician II
 Jake Smith, Operations Supervisor
 Olivia VanderHart, Park Ranger (Mar. 2022 to current)
 Ryan Wiemold, Park Superintendent

IRVM

Tyler Kelley, Vegetation Mgmt. Specialist
 Joe Kooiker, Vegetation Mgmt. Biologist

Environmental Education

Bekah Beall Warburton, Naturalist
 Bobbi Donovan, Naturalist (Jan. 2022 to current)
 Heather Hucka, Naturalist (July 2021 to Oct. 2021)
 Jerry Keys, Environmental Ed. Coordinator
 Jess Lancial, Naturalist
 Erica Place, Outreach Coord. (July 2021 to Feb. 2022)
 Casey Struecker, Outreach/Community Engagement
 Coordinator (April 2022 to current)
 Beth Waage, Naturalist

Seasonal Employees - 2021

Noah Atterbury	Carter Meislahn
Emily Brinkman	Pam Miksell
Bretteny Brownmiller	Reaghan Oakleaf
Brittany Burton	Alex Paoli
Ali Ellsworth	Dustin Patrick
Rachel Heatwole	Caleb Postol
Trevor Heinen	Sara Qualley
Kari Jeffrey	Kaleb Ruffcorn
Kaitlyn Kelley	Nick Thompson

Seasonal Employees - 2022

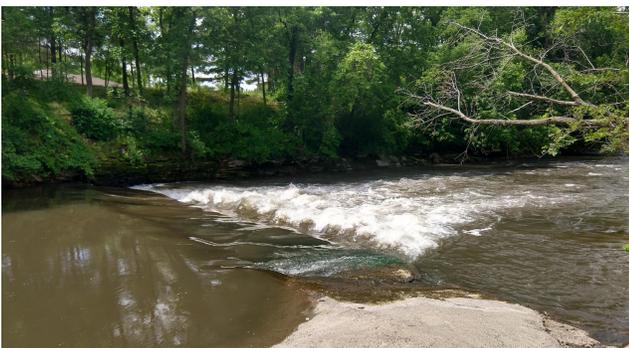
Rebecca Baird	Ben May
Ali Ellsworth	Kellie Prince
McKayla Gartner	Jacob Reischauer
Kylee Gehl	Kaleb Ruffcorn
Hunter Glass	Mattie Sheckles
Sarah Gnade	Melanie Totten-Fetter
Tom Haywood	Sean Vellinga

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Renovation of Hickory Grove Lake was completed and the lake refilled. Renovations were completed prior however last years drought prevented the lake from filling. Spring rains this year filled the lake.
- Story County Conservation hosted the annual 2021 Iowa County Conservation Systems Conference. This three-day event featured pre-conference activities, a social, a day of educational seminars, and a day of educational site visits highlighting current initiatives in conservation.



- Wayfinding signage and mapping for the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail were developed to improve the Slater trailhead and better connect users from the High Trestle Trail. A Central Iowa Trails Monument was also designed and put into production for installation in FY23.
- Hannum's Mill Dam Mitigation was explored through design and public input meetings.



- Dakins Lake primitive campground was remodeled to support larger RVs and increased parking on the sites. Water was added to the sites and it was renamed Dakins Lake East Campground.



- Steps were replaced at McFarland Park along the George Clark trail.



- An Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Fisheries grant was used to fund engineering for a walleye brood rearing pond at Hickory Grove Park.
- Informational kiosks were designed for the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail to focus on the history of the old rail trail and nature information.
- Trail wayfinding and maps were installed at West Peterson Park.
- Staff and design consultants began engineering design for the McFarland Lake restoration.

- Oriole Ridge Lodge had a concrete pad poured on the lakeside to offer an outdoor patio experience.



- A large tile project was completed in the south game area at Hickory Grove Park.
- A donor recognition monument was installed at the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor.



- The Tedesco Connector trail had four benches installed as well as a dog station and bike repair station. These amenities, along with resource restoration items, were funded through a large donation initiative by the Outdoor Alliance of Story County (OASCO).

- West Peterson Park had a major renovation, creating a two-tier system at the beach through retaining wall, fence, and steps. A concrete sidewalk was poured along the parking lot and trail to the beach for improved access. An improved dock was installed allowing better access for anglers, boaters, and paddlers.



NATURAL RESOURCES

- A joint river stabilization project with the IDNR and a private landowner was completed at West Peterson Park between the lake and the river. This project protected a highly eroding bank and created a wetland bench and fish habitat.
- A river stabilization project was completed at Anderson Canoe Access. A longitudinal peak stone technique was used to protect the bank and weirs were installed to move the current towards the center of the river. This project was a joint project with the IDNR.



- Staff received second place for the 2021 Izaak Walton League Wildlife Habitat Improvement Award.
- A biotic assessment was completed at Grant Creek.



- The Environmentally Sensitive Areas Inventory was completed and a team was created to guide further habitat improvement efforts.
- Conservation Corps of Iowa (CCI) and staff continued restoration efforts at Jennett Heritage Area, Doolittle Prairie, West Peterson Park, Robison Wildlife Area, Christiansen Forest Preserve, Wakefield Woods, Dakins Lake and the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail.



- Trees and shrubs were planted at Sleepy Hollow addition, West Peterson, and the Prairie Rail Trail.
- Staff continued prairie seed collection with hand harvest events and combining local ecotype seed.
- Prairie seedlings at Sleepy Hollow Addition, Osheim, and Jennett Heritage Area.

Natural Resource Statistics for FY22

- Planted 80 acres of prairie (includes IRVM)
- Planted 300 shrubs at Sleepy Hollow
- Planted over 50 trees between Hickory Grove Park, Praeri Rail Trail in McCallsburg, and West Peterson Park
- Conducted 258 acres of prescribed fires (27 separate burn units)
- Filled 10 Natural Resource Steward volunteer spots. Six are currently assigned a specific park to work projects.



WATER QUALITY

- Story County Conservation worked with partners to develop the first annual report for the county water quality monitoring plan.
- SCC manages a county wide water quality monitoring initiative utilizing volunteers and staff to monitor water conditions at more than 50 sites (streams, creeks, lakes).
- Data from the water quality monitor testing is available to view at <https://www.cleanwaterhub.org/organization/39>

- The first year of the Edge of Field 'batch and build' program is a collaborative effort from multiple agencies including NRCS, IDALS, City of Ames, Heartland Cooperative, and Story County Conservation installing five saturated buffers and five bioreactors to remove nitrate from water coming from 22 tiles, totaling over 1,000 acres of drainage



- Helped organize two stream clean-up days removing over 3,000 pounds of trash, tires, and shopping carts from loway Creek. Multiple partners were involved with this effort including Prairie Rivers of Iowa, the City of Ames, Skunk River Paddlers, and the Outdoor Alliance of Story County



- The Headwaters of the South Skunk River Water Management Authority is in the process of creating a watershed management plan to protect and restore water bodies in Hamilton and Story counties. The plan will be completed in December 2022

INTEGRATED ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (IRVM)

- Completed 125 work orders and planted 32 acres in roadsides at 114 different roadside sites. Two sites were planted in natural areas for a total of 4.5 acres. Additionally, 41 acres were custom planted by staff.
- Sprayed 231 centerline miles of roadsides with herbicide to address invasive weed concerns. Twenty nine miles of brush were sprayed in sensitive areas.
- Contractors sprayed 316 centerline miles for brush in Howard, Warren, Lincoln, Sherman, and Richland townships. Several site distance issues at driveways and intersections were mechanically cut by staff.
- Conducted prescribed burns in both the fall and spring. Five roadsides were burned for a total of nine acres. Staff burned one seed nursery and one natural area for a total of 17 acres.
- Mowed 42.5 acres in several natural and private areas as part of planting operations.
- Twenty eight noxious weed complaints were addressed by phone or in person. Seven certified letters were sent out.
- Contractors removed trees from the tile line in the New Albany #68 drainage district. Staff burned brush piles in Boone-Story #3 and Hardin-Story #1.
- Rented seeding equipment to 19 landowners/operators. Approximately 259 acres were planted to natives and 19 acres to cool-season species. Approximately 610 pounds of native grass and forb seed were distributed to landowners by working with the local Pheasants Forever chapter.
- One county resident signed up for the No Spray Program. Staff installed Roadside Planting signs on four miles of county roadsides.
- Submitted Living Roadway Trust Fund Grants to assist in the purchase of UTV Trailer.
- Community involvement included a presentation with Conservation Corp of Iowa. Staff worked with the Iowa State Extension office to provide educational material for Iowa Pesticide Applicator annual training. Staff was active with the local NRCS, Historical Society, and Pheasants Forever Chapter. Nasties of Nature presentations were given to Secondary Roads and City of Nevada staff.
- Two seed nurseries produced 731 pounds of usable, prairie seed. Hand-harvested forbs from volunteer events and SCC staff collections increased the diversity of the seed harvested by combines.



IRVM FIELD OPERATIONS COMPARISON BY FISCAL YEAR

	FY20	FY21	FY22
Work Orders Completed	101	82	125
Roadside Plantings (sites)	73	62	114
Roadside Plantings (acres)	56	19	35
Custom Plantings (sites)	1	0	2
Custom Plantings (acres)	5	0	36
Conservation/Other Plantings (sites)	0	4	2
Conservation/Other Plantings (acres)	0	13	5
Roadside Burns (sites)	0	12	10
Roadside Burns (acres)	0	24	9
Roadside Weeds Sprayed (miles)	219	225	231
Foliar Brush Sprayed (miles)	35	17	29
Equipment Rentals (landowners)	26	27	19
Equipment Rentals (acres)	222	317.5	278
Pounds of Seed Harvested	116	320	731
Volunteer Hours	88	155	42
Drainage District (amount billed)	\$30,771.32	\$16,619.47	\$8,255.47
Drainage District Revenue Received	\$24,758.84	\$30,351.50	\$9,937.88



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Conducted 1,014 education and outreach programs resulting in 25,799 contacts through 583 indoor presentations, 385 outdoor experiences, nine service learning opportunities, and 37 co-sponsored events.
- The Environmental Education unit purchased air rifles, targets, and other accessories; atlatls and darts; and slingshots to provide more shooting sports opportunities.
- Thirteen kayaks, paddles, PFDs, and a trailer were purchased to provide more water sports activities. We also teamed with a local volunteer to provide a paddle boarding school.



- Co-sponsored an Iowa Master Naturalists certification class with the Iowa Master Naturalists organization, a 501c3 organization run by volunteers. Thirteen participants received certification.
- Co-sponsored a Master Conservation Program certification series with Story County Extension. Fifteen participants received certification.
- Continued our partnership with Cultivating Hope Farms to provide environmental education programming for people with different abilities.
- Offered a series of LGBTQ+ hikes.

- Summer camps were held with fewer participants per camp, one camp per location, self-brought snacks, limited travel in county vehicles, and no overnight camps. Sixteen half or full-day skills camps were offered in place of overnight camps.



- *Nature Connect*, a Story County Conservation Service Assistance Program in cooperation with Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA) started in 2021. Qualifying Story County residents receive a "50% off" code for online registration for programs and services. Discount codes expire yearly. Recipients must contact MICA staff each calendar year to receive a new online registration discount code.



Increasing access to youth and adult programs, recreation, camping, and more for Story County residents experiencing financial need.

How do I participate?
Call Mid-Iowa Community Action
515-956-3333
to verify need and receive your discount code.

Nature Connect
SCC's Service Assistance Program

Qualifying households receive 50% off programs and services:

- Nature camp at McFarland Park (Pre-K and up)
- Environmental education programs
- Camping at Hickory Grove Park and Dakins Lake
- Shelter reservations

Story County Conservation
www.storycountyconservation.org
Mid-Iowa Community Action
515-956-3333

Nature Camp registration opens April 14 at 6 pm. Watch for camp details on the SCC website.



OUTREACH



Prairie Horizons

The quarterly *Prairie Horizons* newsletter provides articles and a schedule of SCC programs, events, and meetings. It was distributed in both printed and electronic versions, and each edition reached over 3,000 individuals and families. An additional 500+ copies were distributed to area libraries, city halls, and businesses. Newsletter holders are placed at the highest visitation parks (West Peterson Park, Dakins Lake, Hickory Grove Park, and the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor). Event flyers, press releases, and paid advertisements with various local publications also helped us spread the news of programs and projects.

MailChimp

MailChimp is an automated marketing and email platform that provides branding and tracking tools to make it easier for the public to sign-up for press releases and e-newsletters. In the last fiscal year the platform has had 121 new email sign ups resulting in an 11% increase of users.

Social Media and Media Platforms

SCC is actively involved in a variety of social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. Followers are provided important organizational updates, educational content, and awareness on upcoming programs and projects. Facebook has seen a 8% growth in followers while Instagram has not grown. SCC also utilizes other outreach efforts such as a reoccurring monthly spot on the local KHOI radio station.



Content

Sort by: Reach

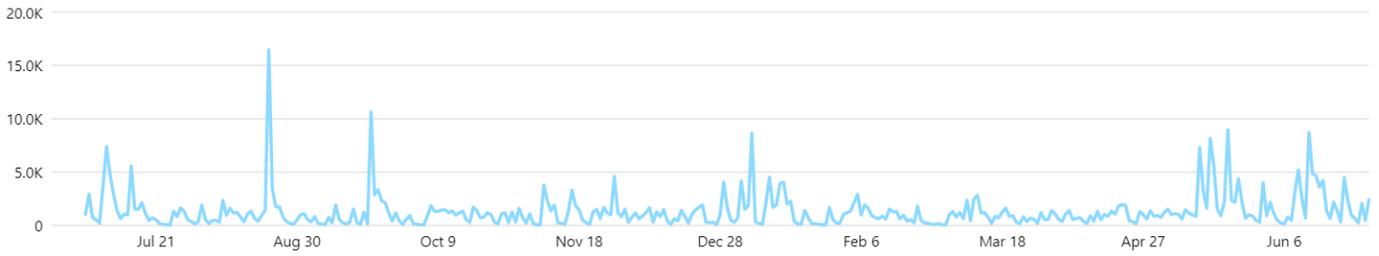
	Aug 21, 2021 192 devices and 55 charger... Post Reach 23,150		Sep 20, 2021 Ouch!! This bug's painful bi... Post Reach 14,621		Mon May 16, 1:51pm Hickory Grove Lake is OPE... Post Reach 13,834
	Sat May 21, 8:00am Before and after. Boats ram... Post Reach 11,874		Fri May 13, 7:28am Wild Women of the Woods... Post Reach 10,667		Mon Jun 13, 7:35am **WEST PETERSON PARK B... Post Reach 10,590

Results

Export

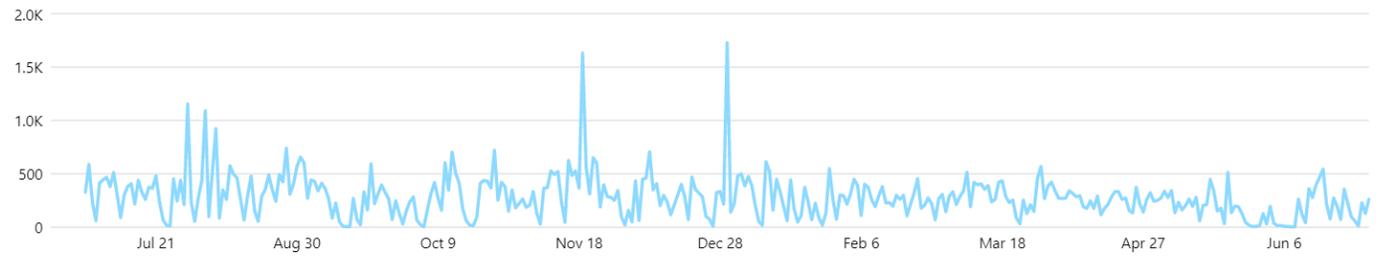
Facebook Page reach

120,507 ↓ 2.3%



Instagram reach

15,028 ↓ 31.9%



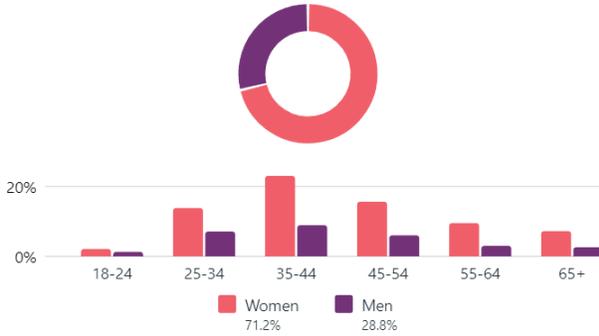
Facebook Page followers

5,517

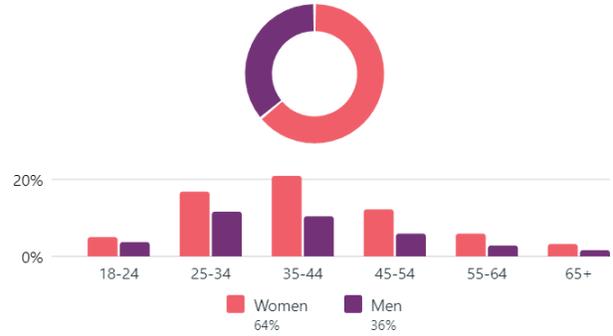
Instagram followers

1,797

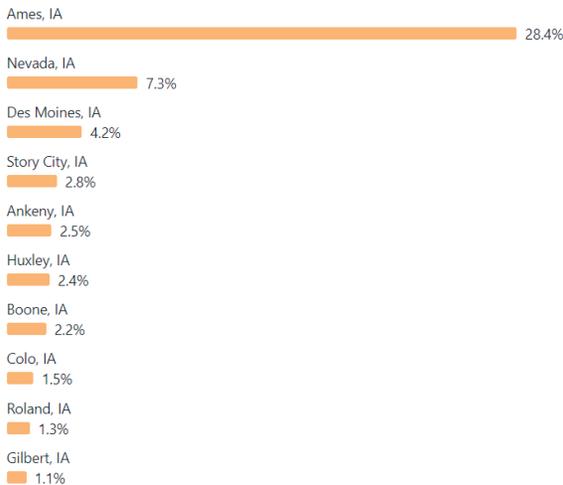
Age & gender



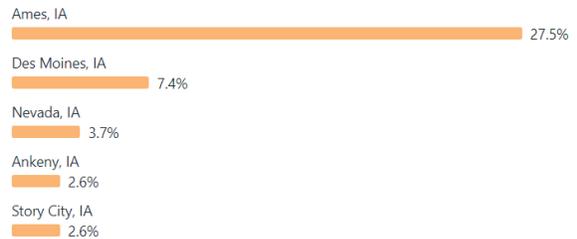
Age & gender



Top cities



Top cities





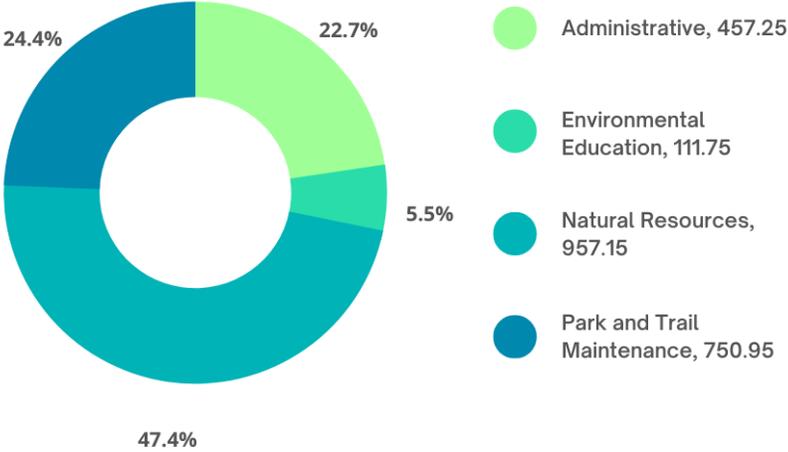
Volunteers are integral in attaining SCC's mission. Volunteer hours logged in FY22 included: serving on the Story County Conservation Board, providing office/clerical help, cleaning SCC parks through the Adopt-A-Park program, water quality monitoring, providing natural resource and land stewardship work, collecting prairie seed, and helping with environmental education programs.

The **Natural Resource Steward** volunteer position has proven to be very successful and useful to utilize volunteer efforts on SCC parks. These volunteers obtain their pesticide applicator license and then receive training and supplies to remove invasive species in SCC properties. Four volunteers passed the pesticide applicator license exam and logged 307.75 hours for the year with and additional six volunteers currently working to obtain their applicators license.

Many individuals, clubs, and corporate groups also donated their time as **water quality monitors** throughout the county. The water quality monitoring program is part of a 10 year program and currently within the second year, efforts will continue through the year 2030. Data collected will help determine pollution sources and overall watershed health in Story County. Currently, SCC has 50 water quality sites with over 40 volunteers actively testing the sites bi-weekly with a total of 216.70 hours logged.

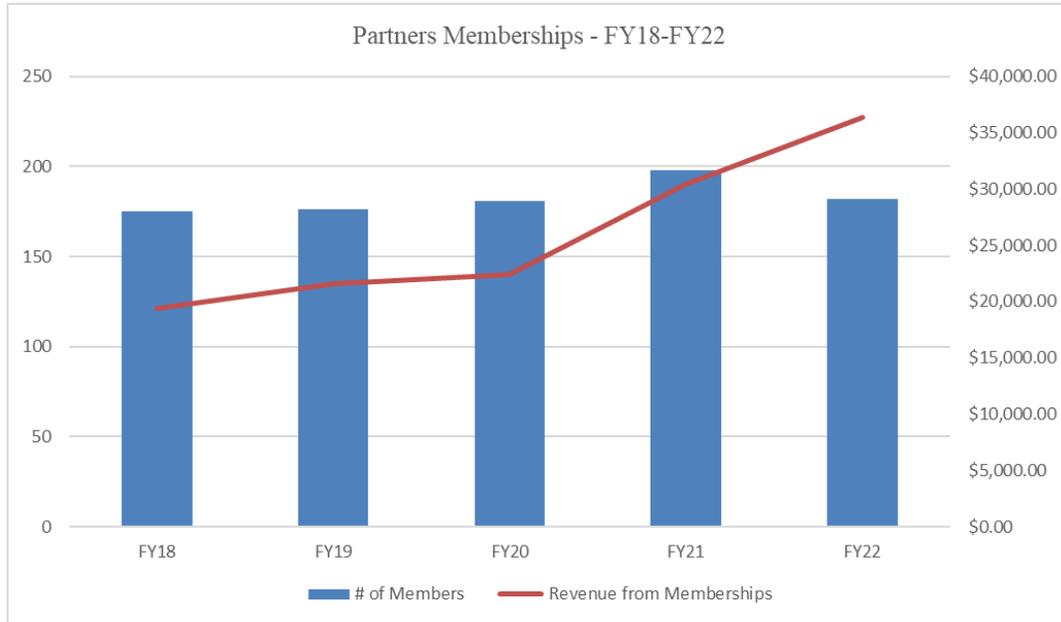
Volunteer Hours

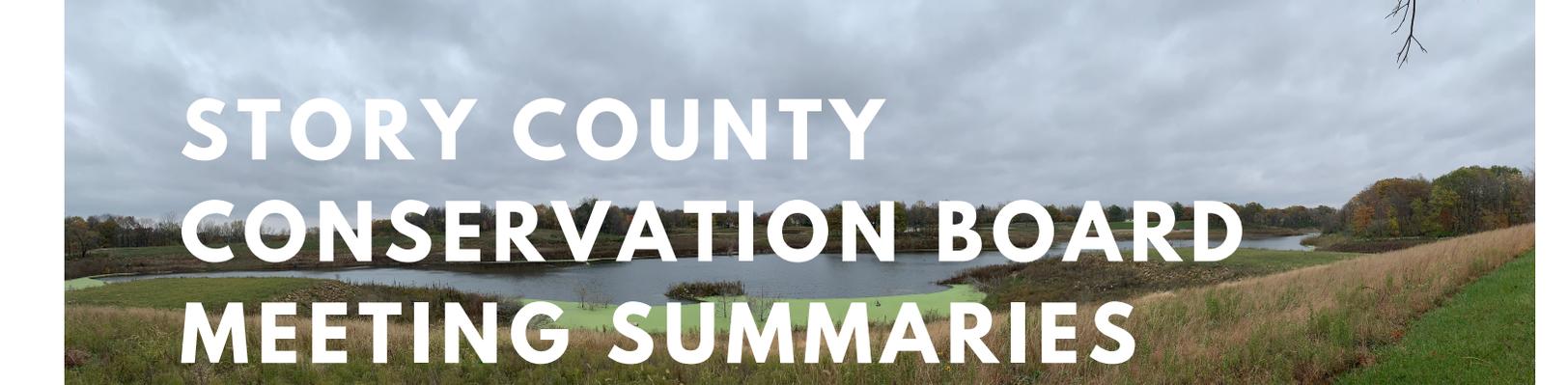
The total volunteer hours contributed for the FY22 fiscal year was 2,018.6 hours which is a 15% increase from hours donated the previous fiscal year. Using the Independent Sector volunteer service value of \$25.16 per hour, volunteers provided \$50,787.97 of service to SCC in FY22.



STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION PARTNERS

Story County Conservation *Partners* Membership levels range from Great Horned Owl at \$30/year to Red-tailed Hawk at \$1,000/year. *Partners* members raised a record breaking \$36,390.00 towards the purchase of the Osheim tract along County Road E-18 and the South Skunk River.





STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING SUMMARIES

July 9, 2021

The board approved the following:

- Watershed Coordinator new hire

July 12, 2021

The board approved the following:

- Additional alternative analysis with Houston Engineering, Inc.
- Contract with Brush and Weed Control Specialists for roadside brush spraying
- Conservation easement with the Office of the State Archeologist for a portion of lands to be transferred to the county from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Erica Place, Outreach Coordinator, submitted a written annual report and was available for comments and to answer questions.

Director Cox updated the board on the ICCS conference, the Hickory Grove Park grand opening/Colo Crossroads Day, and county funds to be received from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

August 9, 2021

The board approved the following:

- Outreach Assistant hire
- Water Trails Development Program grant agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Agreement with ISG Inc. for design services at Soper's Mill
- Memorandum of Understanding with the cities of Ankeny, Madrid, Sheldahl, Slater, Woodward, and Conservation Boards of Boone and Polk County for the High Trestle Trail
- Agreement with RDG Planning and Design for master planning service for property previously owned by Robert Deppe
- Park Naming and Memorial Protocol
- Memorial bench for Dennis Salisbury at Hickory Grove Park

Director Cox updated the board on the ICCS conference, the SCC projects being funded by (ARPA), and staff appreciation.

August 18, 2021

The board approved the following:

- Pay correction for the Outreach Assistant
- Face Coverings Policy
- Updating the Conservation Center Use and Indoor Programming Management Protocol

Director Cox updated the board on a sub-division request from YSS that will require a conservation easement on a portion of the property.

September 13, 2022

The board approved the following:

- Conservation Aide new hire
- Updates to the Story County Conservation Employee Handbook
- Contract with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for streambank stabilization on the South Skunk River at Peterson Park
- Requesting final reimbursement for the Iowa DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant and a State Recreational grant as prepared by Snyder & Associates for the paving of the Heart of Iowa Nature Trails between R38 and 535th Avenue
- Resolution #2022-01 approving an agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation for a Living Roadway Trust Fund Grant for prescribed fire personal protective equipment
- Resolution #2022-02 approving an agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation for a Living Roadway Trust Fund Grant for a 2021 Chevrolet 3500 HD truck
- Proclamation declaring October 2021 as Watershed Awareness Month
- Naming of the McFarland Park Touch-A-Life trail bridges and fishing dock after Phyllis and Paul Brakelsberg
- Conservation easement with Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. for a Youth Recovery Campus in Cambridge, IA
- Contract with Nagle Signs for the fabrication and delivery of 13 wayfinding signs for the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail
- Contract with Halls Backhoe & Trenching for the installation of 13 wayfinding signs for the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail

Jerry Keys, Environmental Education Coordinator, submitted a written annual report and was available for comments and to answer questions.

Director Cox updated the board on the Anderson Access streambank project and reviewed some details regarding the upcoming ICCS conference.

October 25, 2021

The board approved the following:

- Temporary construction easement and permanent access easement with Robert and Kristin Hart
- Temporary construction easement with the Chadwick Raymond Trust
- Contract with Keith Cooper and Sons for streambank restoration project along the Skunk River
- Contract with Halls Excavating and Trenching for campground improvements at Dakins Lake Primitive Campground
- Restructure of Story County Conservation field staff: adding a new job classification - Operations Supervisor; revising one current job classification - Park Ranger; and increasing a full-time equivalent by one

RDG provided a written update on the progress of the Deppe property management plan.

Amelia Schoeneman, Story County Planning and Development Director, reviewed with the board, an update on a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment to Natural Resource Standards.

Director Cox updated the board on the applicants received for the Naturalist position, the ICCS conference profits, ARPA funding requests, carbon pipeline proposals, TELC phase 4, and preparing for the FY23 budget

November 8, 2021

The board approved the following:

- Purchase of hot water pressure washer and skid steer rotary cutter
- Review FY23 budget proposals and Capital Improvement Plan

Director Cox updated the board on Trust for Public Land requirements, requested to have TW Training conduct some staff meetings, and some land south of Ketelsen Marsh that we might be interested in deed to the lease that we currently have.

December 6, 2021

The board approved the following:

- Naturalist new hire
- Story County Conservation board meeting dates for 2022
- Charging a \$3.00 online camping reservation fee
- Contract with Ricken Tiling and Excavating for beach and trail improvements at West Peterson Park
- Cooperative agreement with Prarie Rivers of Iowa RC and D
- Purchase of donor recognition sign for Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor from Art Partners
- Proposal from TW Training for consulting services
- Story County Conservation FY21 Annual Report
- FY23 Conservation and IRVM budget proposal
- FY23 Capital Improvement Project Plan

Director Cox updated the board on the Board of Supervisors' approval of the staff realignment, job postings, West Peterson Park streambank stabilization, DEI committee review, and staff work environment.

January 10, 2022, via Zoom

Chair Meyers administered the oath of office to Christine Laumer, who will serve through 2026. Officers elected for 2022 were Christine Laumer, chair; Nancy Franz, vice-chair; and Jim Pease, secretary.

The board approved the following:

- Promotion of four employees
- 2022 Legislative priorities
- Resolution #2022-03 endorsing a grant application to the CIRTPA Transportation Alternatives Program for hard surfacing/trail improvements on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail from 610th Avenue to 620th Avenue
- Agreement between Story County, Iowa, Story County Conservation Board, and the City of Ames, Iowa for funding assistance for water nutrient removal practices
- South Skunk River Water Trail memorandum of agreement

Director Cox updated the board on current staff openings, ARPA and other funding, a grant request with the Iowa DNR, and the Hickory Grove Park sewer.

February 14, 2022

The board approved the following:

- Promotion of one employee and two Park Ranger new hires
- Updated Conservation Center use and indoor programming management protocols: COVID-19
- First reading of revisions to the Story County Conservation Rules and Regulations
- Contract with Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa for natural resource improvements at Doolittle Prairie
- Contract with Finco Tree/Wood Service LLC for firewood sales at Hickory Grove Park Campground and Dakins Lake Campground
- Contract with Snyder & Associates for design service for paving the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail between the South Skunk River bridge and 610th Avenue

Sara Carmichael, Watershed Coordinator, submitted a written annual report and was available for comments and to answer questions.

Molly Hanson with RDG Planning & Design reviewed the Deppe property draft master plan with the board. She will incorporate all comments from the board and present a final plan at next month's meeting.

Director Cox updated the board on current staff openings, legislation at the Capitol, and the Hickory Grove Park sewer contract.

March 7, 2022

Olivia VanderHard and Logan Heissel were appointed as Story County Conservation peace officers

The board approved the following:

- Conservation Technician I new hire
- Campground attendant contract for the full season at Hickory Grove Park
- Campground attendant contract for the first half of the season at Dakins Lake
- Campground attendant contract for the second half of the season at Dakins Lake
- Water Trails Development Program grant agreement with the Iowa DNR
- Resolution #2022-04 endorsing a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for assistance in purchasing the Deppe Family Conservation Area
- Approve CIRTPA and SRT grant agreements with the Iowa Department of Transportation
- Rescinding the face covering requirement
- Rescind the Conservation Center use and indoor programming management protocol: COVID-19 and adhere to the CDC guidance
- Second reading of revisions to the Story County Rules and Regulations
- Contract with the Iowa DNR for a cooperative agreement to establish a prairie seed production plot
- Concept plan for the Deppe Family Conservation Area

Ryan Wiemold, Park Superintendent, submitted a written annual report and was available for comments and to answer questions.

Sara Carmichael, Watershed Coordinator, updated the board on the Story County Conservation Watershed Implementation Matrix.

Director Cox updated the board on carbon pipelines, Headwaters WMA, the Dotson property development, and the Hickory Grove Park sewer.

April 11, 2022

The board approved the following:

- Pay adjustments for two employees; Outreach/Community Engagement Coordinator new hire; three seasonal re-hires; and ten new seasonal employees
- Contract with Finch Livestock Exchange for management grazing in Story County Conservation areas
- Purchasing the standard department header package from Civic Plus for the Story County Conservations website
- Contract with Halls Backhoe and Trenching for streambank stabilization on the South Skunk River at Anderson Access

Discussion regarding the 28E Agreement with Iowa Regional Utilities Association and the City of Colo for wastewater services at Hickory Grove Park.

Dan Haug with Prairie Rivers of Iowa presented the 2021 annual report for the Story County Water Quality Monitoring Plan.

Director Cox updated the board on some property recently purchased by INHF needing some mitigation banking, an update on the two carbon pipelines, the Water Trail Agreement, ARPA funding for outdoor recreation, Colo Crossroads festival at Hickory Grove Park, and discussed the analysis received from Terry Whitson.

May 9, 2022

The board approved the following:

- Pay adjustments for three employees
- Contract with Brush and Weed Control Specialist for roadside brush spraying
- Living Roadways Trust Fund grant application for material handling equipment
- Living Roadways Trust Fund grant application for an equipment trailer
- Purchase of replacement tasers from Axon Enterprise, Inc.
- 28E Agreement with Iowa Regional Utilities Association and City of Colo for wastewater services at Hickory Grove Park and a Membership Agreement with Iowa Regional Utilities Association

Brandon Clough, Natural Resource Specialist, submitted a written annual report and was available for comments and to answer questions.

Bruce Wright with the Outdoor Alliance of Story County updated the board on some of the project they have partnered with Story County Conservation and others.

Director Cox updated the board on the Strategic Plan timeline, the DEI assessment, McFarland Lake renovation, docks at Hickory Grove Park, and an update on the Hickory Grove Park sewer.

June 13, 2022

The board approved the following:

- Step and longevity adjustments for three employees
- Resolution #2022-06 approving FY23 salaries for Story County Conservation Employees
- Resolution #2206-05 endorsing a grant application to the State Recreation Trails Program for hard surfacing/trail improvements of the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail from 610th Avenue to County Road S-14
- Hannum's Mill low-head dam mitigation alternatives were discussed and tabled until the August board meeting
- Change order with Dan Moody Excavating for tile repairs at Hickory Grove Park
- Change order with Hall Backhoe and Trenching for campgrounds camping pads at Dakins Lake
- Professional services agreement with Shive-Hattery for engineering services for the construction of a cabin at Dakins Lake

Pat Shehan, Special Projects Ranger, submitted a written annual report and was available for comments and to answer questions.

Director Cox updated the board on the LWCF grant, the BOS approved our \$3M ARPA funds request for a match on a Destination Iowa grant, Headwaters WMA, and the US Army Corps of Engineers project.



GRANTS AWARDED

The following grants and agreements were awarded in FY22. Expenditures and reimbursements may occur in the year awarded or over several years.

FUNDING SOURCE	TITLE	AMOUNT AWARDED
Iowa Department of Transportation - State Recreational Trails Grant	Heart of Iowa Nature Trail - South Skunk River Bridge to 610th Avenue	\$250,000
Iowa Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program Project (CIRTPA)	Heart of Iowa Nature Trail - South Skunk River Bridge to 610th Avenue	\$384,000
Iowa Department of Natural Resources - Water Trails Development Grant	Soper's Mill Access Road Improvements	\$53,788
Iowa Department of Natural Resources - Water Trails Development Grant	Soper's Mill Access Reconstruction	\$85,000
Iowa Department of Transportation - Living Roadways Trust Fund	2021 Chevy 3500 HD truck	\$10,000
Iowa Department of Transportation - Living Roadways Trust Fund	Prescribed fire PPE and equipment	\$800
Iowa Department of Natural Resources - Wildlife Diversity Grant	Jennett Heritage Area remnant prairie restoration	\$4,080
Iowa Native Plant Society	Inventory of cemetery remnants in Story County	\$1,250
Total Grants/Agreements - FY21		\$787,898



Bekah Beall - Iowa Association of Naturalists Joe Halbur Scholarship Committee Member

Sara Carmichael - Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority Alternate; Iowa Rivers Revival Board Member

Mike Cox - County Conservation Director's Association Professional Development Committee Member

Bobbi Donovan - Iowa Association of Naturalists Awards Committee Member

Tyler Kelley - Iowa Weed Commissioners Association Board Member At Large

Joe Kooiker - Association for Integrated Roadside Management Board President; Living Roadways Trust Fund Steering Committee

Jess Lancia - National Association for Interpretation Heartland Region Awards Committee Member

Pat Shehan - County Conservation Peace Officers Association Executive Committee Member; District 1 Fish Habitat Stamp Grant Committee Chairperson; InterConnect Plan Advisory Committee Member

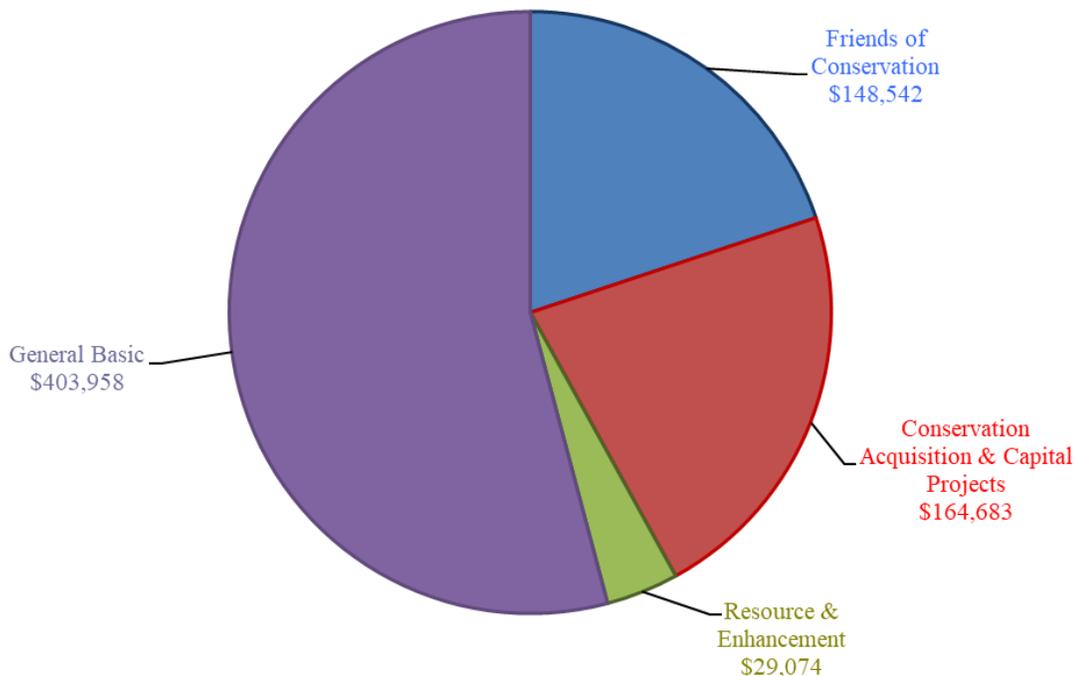
Beth Waage - National Association for Interpretation Heartland Region Secretary; National Association for Interpretation Heartland Region Grants Committee Member

Ryan Wiemold - County Conservation Peace Officers Association President; High Trestle Trail Advisory Committee Member



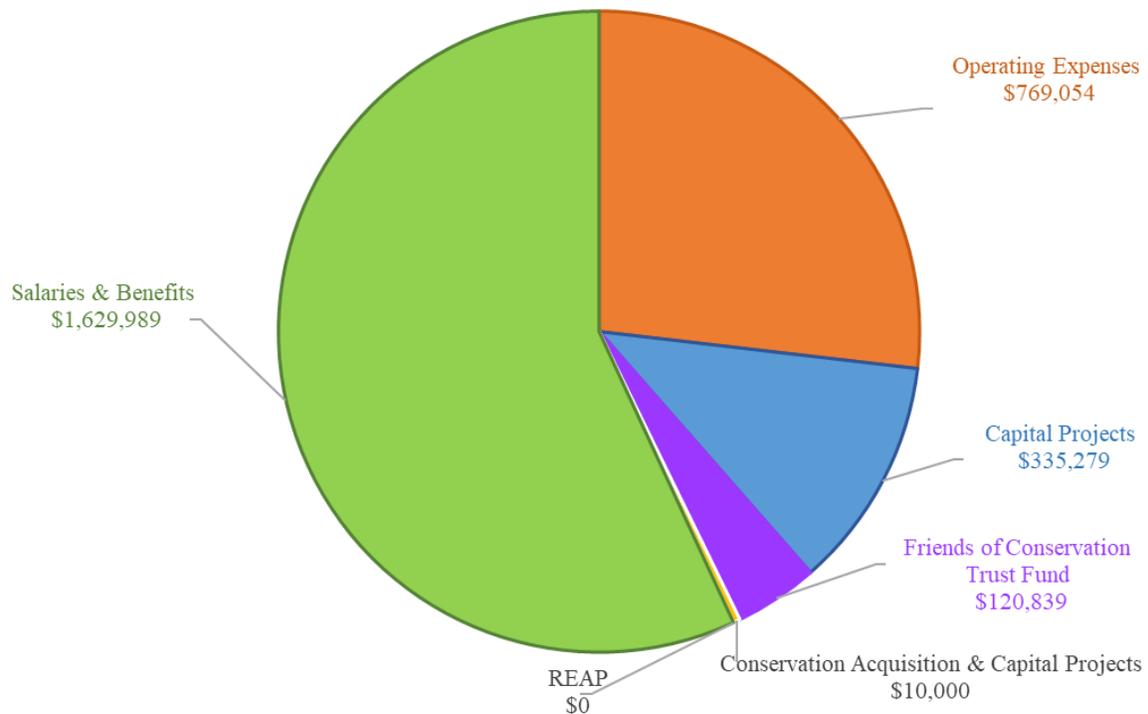
FINANCIAL REPORTS

CONSERVATION REVENUE - FY22 = \$746,257

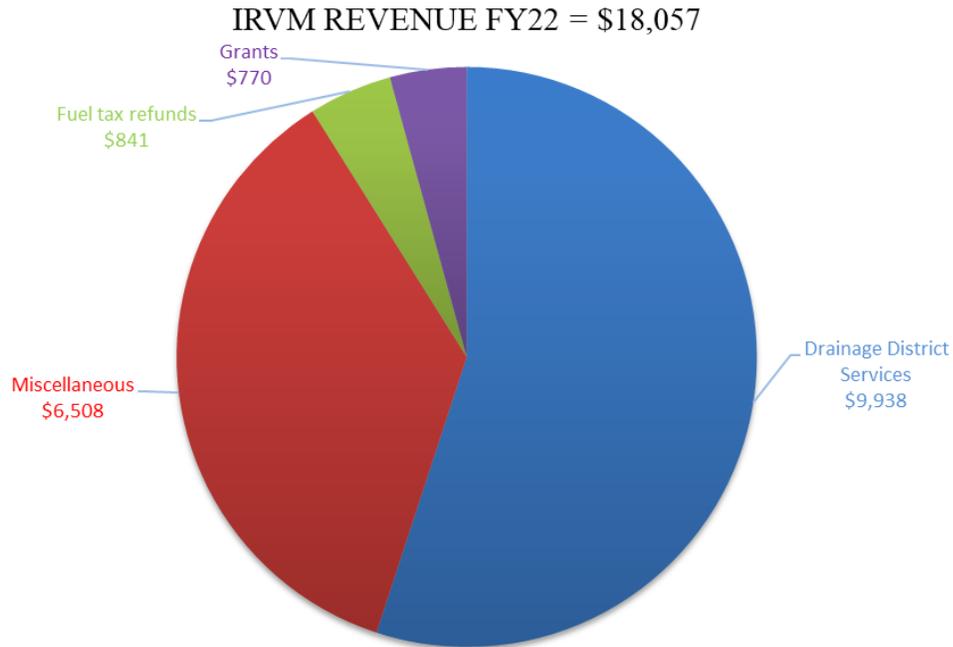


- General Basic - fees, building and equipment rentals, miscellaneous \$42,744; FEMA \$65,421; grants \$295,793.
- Friends of Conservation Trust Fund - donations \$108,930; *Partners* membership \$36,390; interest earned \$3,222.
- Conservation Acquisition & Capital Projects - camping fees \$164,683.
- REAP - annual per county and per capita distributions from the state \$28,725; interest \$349.

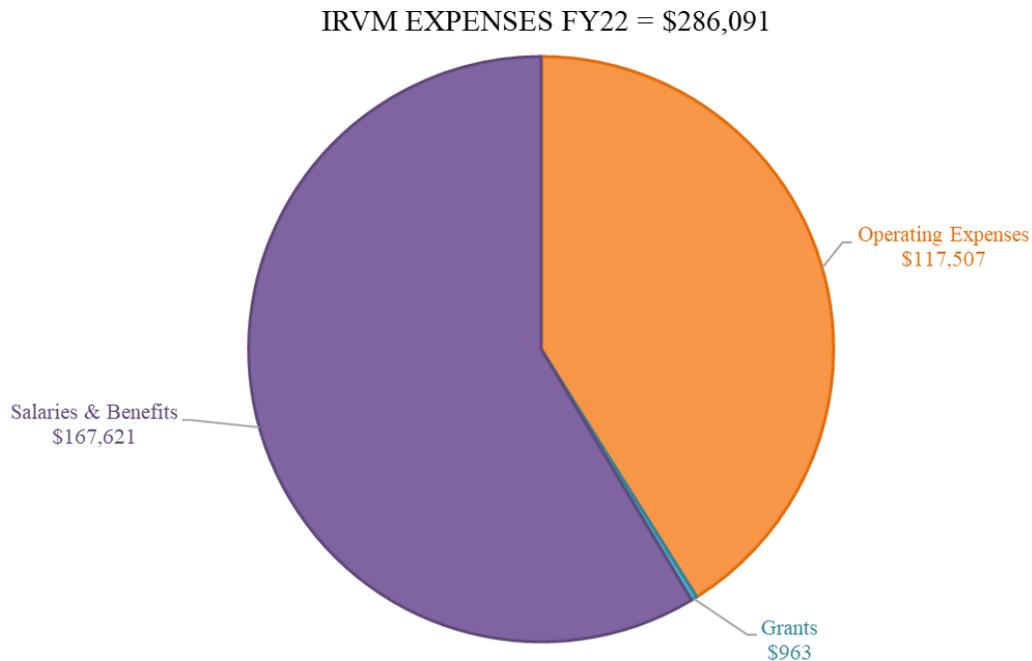
CONSERVATION EXPENDITURES - FY22 = \$2,865,162



- Salaries & Benefits - 22 full-time staff and 15 seasonal staff.
- Operating Expenses - shop, office, programming, and recreational supplies; vehicles, buildings, and grounds maintenance; utilities; education and training; and new equipment.
- Capital Projects - Dakins Lake primitive campground improvements \$55,810; West Peterson Park beach improvements \$46,500; Heart of Iowa Nature Trail wayfinding and info hub \$45,283; Skunk River water trail access at Soper's Mill \$13,200; McFarland Lake restoration design \$52,789; Heart of Iowa Nature Trail paving \$96,027; Hickory Grove Park walleye rearing pond \$13,385; Skunk River stabilization at Peterson Park \$12,285.
- Friends of Conservation Trust Fund - land acquisition \$42,125; miscellaneous expenditures from donations and memorials \$55,911; Headwaters of the South Skunk River WMA cash match \$5,000; Skunk River stabilization at Peterson Park \$4,500; McFarland Lake restoration design \$13,303.
- Conservation Acquisition & Capital Projects - US Army Corps of Engineers archaeological study \$10,000.



- Grants - reimbursement from Living Roadway Trust Fund.
- Drainage District Services - fees collected for brush control in the county's drainage districts.
- Miscellaneous - fees for equipment rentals \$1,221; custom planting and mowing \$5,287.
- Fuel tax refund.



- Salaries & Benefits - 2 full-time and 2 seasonal staff.
- Operating Expenses - shop and miscellaneous supplies; vehicle, building, roadsides, and drainage district maintenance; utilities; contract services; education and training; and new equipment.
- Grants - new equipment purchased through the Living Roadway Trust Fund agreements.

FACILITIES REVENUE AND USAGE - FY20-FY22

	FY20	FY21	FY22
Dakins Lake Main Campground Revenue	\$41,558	\$44,840	\$53,140
# camping nights / # people	1,125 / 2,144	2,752 / 2,234	2,300 / 2,070
Dakins Lake Primitive Campground Revenue	\$5,084	\$7,161	\$3,196
# camping nights / # people	260 / 554	445 / 730	204 / 261
Hickory Grove Breezy Bay Campground Revenue	\$48,229	\$93,528	\$103,835
# camping nights / # people	1,536 / 2,403	4,463 / 4,221	4,812 / 5,042
Hickory Grove Primitive Campground Revenue	\$1,731	\$3,197	\$3,670
# camping nights / # people	121 / 255	280 / 418	298 / 447
Robison/Supervised Youth Camping Revenue	\$226	\$695	\$842
# camping nights / # people	26 / 73	50 / 162	64 / 392
Multipurpose Room Revenue	\$2,080	\$0	\$3,688
# paid rentals / # rentals with fee waived	5 / 12	0 / 0	11 / 22
Dakins Shelter Revenue	\$(58)	\$550	\$650
# reservations	9	11	13
Oriole Ridge Revenue	\$650	\$1,500	\$1,825
# reservations	5	20	19
Snow Bunting Revenue	\$0	\$200	\$400
# reservations	0	4	9
Firewood Revenue	\$827	\$970	\$916
Special Events Permits Revenue / # permits	\$150 / 2	\$450 / 6	\$400 / 4
Boat Rental Revenue / # rentals	\$0 / 0	\$0 / 0	\$0 / 0
Waterfront (concessions) Revenue	\$0	\$463	\$365

STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION PROPERTIES MAP





PARKS & AREA AMENITIES

ACRES: Prairie/Wetland/Woodland
 CAMPSITES: Electric/Water/Spotic/Non-Electric/Youth/Dump/Station/Remote
 WATER: Drinking/Showers
 TOILETS: Flush/Portable (separate)
 SHELTER: Enclosed/Open/Rental/Fee
 PICNICKING
 TRAILS: Hiking/Equestrian/Mt. Bike/Bike-Limestone/Showmobile/Water
 SWIMMING: Beach
 FISHING: Pier/Jetty/Lake(acres)/Stream
 BOATING: Canoe/Electric/Boat P. Rental/Ramp
 RECREATION: Archery/Playground
 HUNTING: Wetland/Forest/Upland

265th Street Access 56091 265th Street, Ames, 50010	1 acre									W	S	C	
Anderson Access 56743 150th Street, Story City, 50248	Wo 2 acres									W	S	C	
Askew Bridge/Cambridge Pond 57887 290th Street, Cambridge, 50046	P, W 26.5 acres									H.5, W	L4, S	C	W, U
Bear Creek 16415 Pleasant Valley Road, Story City, 50248	Wo 123 acres									H1.87, M1.87	S		F
C.J. Shreck Access 59627 Highway 210, Cambridge, 50046	3 acres									W	S	C	
Carroll Prairie 61250 200th Street, Nevada, 50201	P 49 acres												U
Christiansen Forest Preserve 59973 310th Street, Huxley, 50124	P, Wo 49 acres	Y1								H1.5, M1.5			
Cooper's Prairie Marsh 58249 200th Street, Nevada, 50201	W, P 40 acres												W, U
Crooked Bend 15997 Pleasant Valley Road, Story City, 50248	Wo 66 acres										S		F
Dakins Lake 70613 130th Street, Zearing, 50278	P, W 101 acres	E10, EW17, EWS13, Y1, D	D, S	F, P	OR1	P				H1.5, M.5	P, J, L20	C, E, R	P
Doolittle Prairie 14249 560th Avenue, Story City, 50248	W, P 43 acres					P							*U
E-18 Greenbelt Access 56342 130th Street, Story City, 50248	W, P, Wo 210 acres									H2.5, E2.5, M2.5			F, U
Ed Powell Wildlife Area 68328 130th Street, Zearing, 50278	P 17 acres												U
Gladys Leui Preserve 27371 670th Avenue, Maxwell, 50161	P, Wo 25 acres												
Heart of Iowa Nature Trail Runs parallel to Hwy 210 from Slater to Melbourne	W, P, Wo 394 acres					P				H21.5, E21.5, L21.5, S21.5			U
Hertz Family Woods and Nature Preserve 25401 Country Club Road, Nevada, 50201	W, P, Wo 21.54 acres												
Hickory Grove Park 67382 250th Street, Colo, 50056	P, Wo 445 acres	E43, N11, Y1, D	D, S	F, P	ER2, OF5	P				H4	B	P, J, L98	C, E, BR, R, A, P, W, F, U
I-35 Prairie Area 15233 Interstate Highway 35, Story City, 50248	P, Wo 23.47 acres									H.25			
Jennett Heritage Area 62321 280th Street, Nevada, 50201	P, W, Wo 171 acres									H.5, M.5	L2.5, S		W, F, U
Jim Ketelsen Greenwing Marsh 21163 570th Avenue, Ames, 50010	W, P 68 acres									H1.72, M1.72			W, U
Larson Marsh 59537 220th Street, Nevada, 50201	W, P 12 acres												W, U
Lekwa Access 56156 130th Street, Story City, 50248	Wo, W 10 acres									W	S	C	
Leopold Woods 55821 175th Street, Ames, 50010	Wo 22 acres												
McFarland Park 56461 180th Street, Ames, 50010	P, Wo 240 acres	Y2	D	F, P	OF1	P				H7, M6	PL6	C, E	P, F
O'Neil Prairie 5384 O'Neil Drive, Ames, 50010	W, P 5 acres												
Peterson Park East: 55756 180th Street, Ames, 50010 West: 55310 180th Street, Ames, 50010	P, Wo 203 acres					P				H5, E5, M5	B	L35, S	C, E, R, *W, F, U
Peterson Park Access 17952 Templeton Road, Ames, 50010	2.5 acres									W	S	C	
Praeri Rail Trail Runs parallel to E-18 from Roland to Zearing	P 140 acres									H10.5, E10.5, M10.5, S10.5			U
Robison Wildlife Acres 29490 632nd Avenue, Nevada, 50201	P, Wo 78 acres	Y1, R				P				H1.57	L1	C	
Roland Wildlife Area 12007 610th Avenue, Roland, 50236	P, W 80 acres												U, W
Ronald "Dick" Jordan Family Wildlife Area 56091 265th Street, Ames, 50010	P, W, Wo 175 acres												F, U
Sheffield Wildlife Area 14665 570th Street, Story City, 50248	3 acres												U
Skunk River Flats 26995 Sand Hill Trail, Ames, 50010	W, P 163 acres									H2.3, M2.3	S		*W, U
Sleepy Hollow Access 646 W Riverside Road, Ames, 50010	P, Wo 22 acres									W	S	C	
Soper's Mill North: 56501 170th Street, Ames, 50010 South: 56364 170th Street, Ames, 50010	16 acres									W	S	C	F, U
Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor 1815 Plaza Loop, Ames, 50010	P, W, Wo 37 acres					OF	P			H2			
Tedesco Connector Trail Connects the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor to R38 bike lanes	17 acres									H2.75			
Wakefield Woods 2480 E 190th Street, Ames, 50010	Wo, P 10 acres						P						
Wicks Wildlife Area 10817 Timberland Drive, Story City, 50248	54 acres												*F, U