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Conservation of Natural Resources and Recreation

The abundance and health of our natural resources and recreation are vital to the well-being of our communities, the prosperity of our economy and the health of our regional ecological systems. This Chapter outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies for preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing our natural and recreation resources. Because all systems are interconnected, these goals address water, land, wildlife, air, vegetation, soil, geology, and the welfare of our citizens.

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Goals, Objectives and Strategies

As population, development, and land values increase, the need for strategic natural resource and recreation planning and management becomes more important. Preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing our natural resources will help improve the quality of life for those currently living in Story County and help ensure a legacy for future generations.

The goals, objectives, and strategies for this Chapter are generally intended to be implemented by the Story County Conservation Board and incorporated into the Conservation Board's strategic plan. Both the Conservation Board and the Board of Supervisors should periodically review this Chapter and evaluate its progress and priorities. Partnerships with local schools, cities, conservation groups and other organizations should be sought to support these efforts.

To establish a shared vision for Story County that will guide future actions and decisions, the following natural resource and recreation goals have been developed.

The goals often build upon one another. For example, installing vegetated buffer strips along waterways protects ground and surface water, protect adjacent land from erosion, attracts wildlife and pollinators, and increases plant diversity. Buffer strips also provide space for trails that promote active lifestyles. This one effort helps accomplish seven of the eight goals listed below.

Natural Resource and Recreation Goal 1

Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the quality of Story County's ground water and surface water.

Current efforts underway include streambank stabilization at Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor (TELC) and West Petersen Park, watershed signage initiative, watershed assessments, shoreline and gully stabilization at Hickory Grove Lake, oxbow restorations at Jordan Wildlife Area, and numerous outreach efforts.

Objective NRR1.1: Provide leadership for limiting the loss or degradation of Story County's riparian zones, wetlands, and other water bodies.





Objective NRR1.2: Preserve, enhance, and where possible restore the natural and beneficial functions of wetlands, streams, rivers, creeks and lakes.

Objective NRR1.3: Implement and/or encourage the implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices to reduce the speed and impact of stormwater runoff.

Objective NRR1.4: Educate the public to lessen the negative human impact on water quality and quantity.

Objective NRR1.5: Encourage the use of conservation practices for agricultural land.



Strategies

- Recommend the use of Best Management Practices (i.e. bioretention cells, permeable paving, vegetated swales, etc.) on County approved projects and promote their use and requirement.
- Identify and map impaired water bodies to raise water quality awareness in Story County.
- Provide citizens with educational resources and activities on improving water quality at the watershed level.
- Consider establishing a city-county “Ground Water Task Force” to analyze existing underground water and aquifer usage and capacity and develop a long-term strategy to manage water usage to ensure adequate future capacity and access.
- Encourage water quality improvement strategies such as bioretention cells in drainage districts.
- Encourage landowners along open drainage ditches to adopt water quality improvement strategies such as buffer strips or vegetated swales.
- Work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to incentivize the agricultural community to adopt additional water quality and quantity best practices.
- Encourage buffer strips along priority stream beds.
- Investigate creating a “Waterway Reserve Program” similar to the Iowa “Forest Reserve Program” that preserves native Iowa timber while allowing the land owner to hold the land tax free. Consider developing a similar reserve program for buffer strips.
- Encourage greenway development along surface waters.
- Develop a program to promote sustainable agriculture techniques and practices.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Natural Resource and Recreation Goal 2

Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance Story County's land, soil, and geological resources.

Current efforts underway include Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor (TELC), Jordan Wildlife Area, Carroll Prairie, Sensitive Areas Inventory and numerous outreach efforts.

Objective NRR2.1: Protect the native soils and geologic resources (processes and features) as integral components of natural systems.

Objective NRR2.2: Prevent the unnatural erosion, physical removal, or contamination of native soils, as they support diverse biotic communities and serve as the foundation for all terrestrial ecosystems.

Objective NRR2.3: Maintain and restore the integrity of existing geologic resources.

Strategies

- Research, map, and inventory the existing below-surface resources of Story County to identify particularly significant and sensitive areas and develop practices and strategies to protect them.
- Develop educational resources and activities to promote positive behavior changes that improve Story County's soil and geologic resources.



Natural Resource and Recreation Goal 3

Restore the natural diversity, dynamics, distributions, habitats, and behaviors of Story County's native plant and animal populations.

Objective NRR3.1: Preserve and protect the existing native plants and animals, as well as re-establishing them where they historically occurred.

Objective NRR3.2: Restore native plant and animal populations in parks where they have been eliminated due to natural processes or human activity, given adequate space and habitat for their re-establishment.

Objective NRR3.3: Promote the return of native Iowa vegetation, to enhance the ecosystem's ability to handle human and natural impacts and for natural beauty.

Objective NRR3.4: Re-populate historic native plant types where possible, and initiate and maintain the processes that sustain them (i.e. prescribed prairie burns).



Objective NRR3.5: Establish and maintain healthy habitats that meet the needs of native animal populations and their migratory patterns.

Objective NRR3.6: Minimize human impacts on native plant and animal populations, the ecosystem they comprise, and processes that sustain them.

Objective NRR3.7: Restrict development within environmentally sensitive areas including floodplains, steep slopes, wooded areas, and wetlands.

Objective NRR3.8: Establish native vegetation communities along roadways and drainage ditches.



Strategies

- Inventory the County’s sensitive areas, prairies, habitats, and other natural resources and seek protection for those areas.
- Continue to review and follow the County’s floodplain regulations to restrict and regulate development.
- Promote and encourage the planting of ‘pollinator plots’ in strategic areas, through education programs.
- Encourage development that limits impact on existing wooded areas and preserves and restores natural prairie and wetlands.
- Promote educational programs to protect and restore Story County’s native plants and animals.
- Advocate for restoration of ‘prairie potholes’ within Story County.
- Continue to implement the roadside vegetation program and identify roadsides eligible for roadside vegetation to be included as part of the roadside vegetation program.
- Protect the quality of natural resources in County managed areas - water, habitat, soil, and prairie.
- Recognize the significance of drainage corridors in serving important ecological functions.



Natural Resource and Recreation Goal 4

Maintain, improve, and expand recreational features (parks, trails, and open space) and their services for current and future safe access and use.

Current efforts underway include resurfaced sections of the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail and the Praeri Rail Trail, numerous outreach efforts and community engagement evnts.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective NRR4.1: Ensure all public parks, green spaces, and services within Story County are safe and easy to access.

Objective NRR4.2: Provide accessibility for all individuals through the use of accessible parking spaces, play equipment, and paved trails.

Objective NRR4.3: Provide connected networks of pedestrian and bike friendly pathways that link public parks and communities, area attractions and destinations.

Objective NRR4.4: Maximize the use of current parks by researching, introducing, implementing, and evaluating state-of-the-art equipment and activities.

Objective NRR4.5: Provide safe biking, hiking, watercraft, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, and equestrian opportunities within the county.

Objective NRR4.6: Connect existing and future trails and routes across cities and adjoining counties.

Objective NRR4.7: Meet the varied recreational needs of our residents while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Objective NRR4.8: Construct park improvements which provide safe recreation and meet needs of park visitors.

Strategies

- Encourage citizen participation in the planning, development, and maintenance of recreational trails and facilities through public hearings, surveys, and activities to ensure community needs and desires are met.
- Periodically review the existing trail network and the proposed trails and greenway plan to identify gaps, determine trail improvements, and set greenway priorities.
- Develop and fund a future trails network to increase connectivity, and ensure safe access to all public parks and recreation areas.
- Partner with local school districts, conservation groups, and organizations to support and promote recreation and natural resource protection programs.
- Work with land owners adjacent to trails and parks to develop a conservation strategy.
- Work with the NRCS and similar entities to develop, implement, and evaluate a plan that provides public access to and/or through developed buffer strips and pollinator planting zones.
- Provide natural resource areas with very limited development for wildlife observation, resource protection, bird watching, and hunting.
- Invest in park infrastructure to maintain safe and enjoyable



experiences for visitors.

- Develop park amenities which increase usage of parks and add to the economic, social, and health benefits of parks.
- Invest in equipment and staff training to provide safe recreational opportunities.

Natural Resource and Recreation Goal 5

Foster air quality improvement to preserve natural resources and sustain community health and enjoyment.

Current efforts underway include the planting of 90 trees at the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor.

Objective NRR5.1: Provide safe, easy, and affordable options for sustainable transportation.

Objective NRR5.2: Promote the use of sustainable forms of transportation to decrease the amount of harmful small particulates entering and jeopardizing the quality of the air.

Objective NRR5.3: Increase the amount of tree canopy in select areas to enhance clean air and reduce summer temperatures throughout Story County.

Objective NRR5.4: Promote increased walkability and bikability within Story County and incorporate the use of complete streets designs.

Strategies

- Continue to review the existing trails network, as well as the proposed trails and greenway plan to identify and provide needed connectivity.
- Promote the use of bicycle travel and increased walkability with an improved trail network and increase in safely designed bike and pedestrian lanes.
- Provide educational resources and activities that relate air quality to health and advocate residents to improve air quality and lower their carbon footprint.
- Implement tree planting programs to re-establish natural tree cover within the county.
- Promote the creation of greenways that include native vegetation.

Natural Resource and Recreation Goal 6

Promote and conduct environmental education to create awareness and behavior change for improved natural resources.

Objective NRR6.1: Educate the public on the significance of preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing Story County's natural resources.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Objective NRR6.2: Work with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of the water, air, soil, geology, vegetation, and wildlife of Story County.

Objective NRR6.3: Reach an increasingly diverse group of residents with environmental education opportunities.

Strategies

- Promote natural resource protection programs that are easy to implement and understand to allow people of all ages to become involved.
- Establish opportunities for community members to connect with nature to gain a sense of environmental awareness and responsibility.
- Promote experiential and place-based educational programs to encourage active participation and develop a sense of community ownership.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to educate as well as learn.
- Provide interactive and technology-based learning opportunities.



Natural Resource and Recreation Goal 7

Focus resources on high-priority areas identified within Story County.

Objective NRR7.1: Identify and improve high-priority areas within Story County as environmentally sensitive, habitat for endangered species, or lacking safe trails and recreational opportunities.

Objective NRR7.2: Ensure that areas in need remain a high priority, and are able to improve over time.

Objective NRR7.3: Provide increased ecosystem services for residents and visitors of Story County. Ecosystem services are benefits for humans that arise from healthily functioning ecosystems. (i.e. production of air, food and fiber, and fresh water).

Objective NRR7.4: Work with the agricultural community to establish support for preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural and recreation resources.

Strategies:

- Work with the NRCS office and State of Iowa Department of Agriculture to develop a large scale sustainable agriculture plan.





- Consider development of a test site or streambed area with the agricultural community, DNR, and the NRCS office to document soil and water quality and the impact on agricultural business.
- Explore and prioritize areas around existing Story County parks for potential future expansion.
- Work with the City of Ames to explore and prioritize the Hallet materials extraction site located SW of I-35/US 30 interchange for potential reuse and revitalization.
- Identify and improve steep slopes that need erosion control or riparian restoration.
- Identify potential future trail, park, and natural resource conservation locations and pursue land acquisition and/or easements.
- Focus resources on land acquisition of high-priority areas.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to help improve high-priority areas.



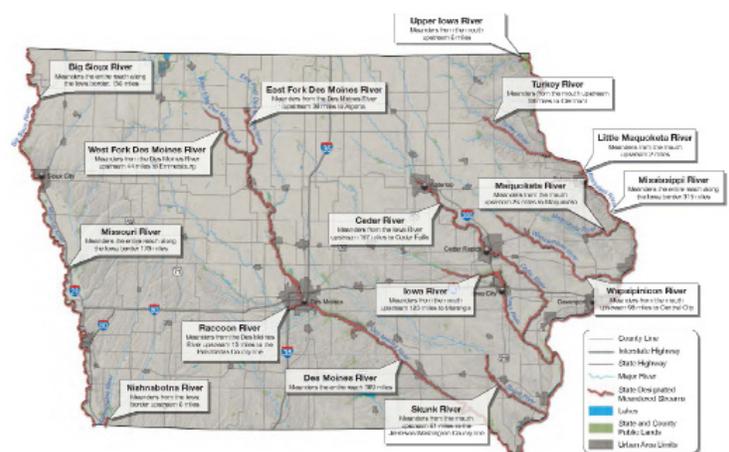
South Skunk River Water Trail Plan

Story County Conservation, and the Skunk River Paddlers have been working to designate the South Skunk River in Story County as a State Water Trail since the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) began the water trail program in 2008. The status of “state-designated” is reserved for water trails that represent the best paddling experiences in each region of the state. Not every county in Iowa will have a state-designated water trail. The IDNR sponsored a comprehensive Water Trail Plan in 2013. Story County Conservation Board (SCCB) emerged as the water trail sponsor as a result of that planning and a steering group of residents and stakeholders is also in place to guide development and management.

The South Skunk River is a non-meandered stream beginning in Hamilton County. The South and North Skunk rivers join in Keokuk County, becoming the Skunk River. The Skunk enters into the Mississippi River in the far southeast part of the state. The Story County portion of the South Skunk River is 38 miles in length. The watershed area draining into the Story County portion of the river is approximately 651 square miles.

The South Skunk River has always been used by the people living in the area. The Phase IA Study conducted by the Iowa Office of State Archeology for the water trail plan concluded there are 131 known archaeological sites recorded from bluff top to bluff top on either side of the South Skunk in Story County and 87 within 400m of the streambanks of the South Skunk (OSA 2014). Some of these sites are located on public property and others are privately-owned. Of the 131 sites, 95 sites include prehistoric components, 19 with historic components and 18 contained both historical and prehistoric components. Recorded prehistoric sites included isolated finds, camps, scatters, lithic scatters, open habitations, and kill/butchering.

In recent times, the South Skunk River in Story County has been used for recreation by anglers, canoeists, kayakers, and tubers. The thirty-eight miles of river is divided into eleven segments by river access points.



Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources





The water trail passes through three communities (Story City, Ames, and Cambridge). Two low-head and one sheet pile dams are located on the South Skunk River in Story County. Story City Park has a sheet pile dam that is impassable to paddlers during most water conditions. Several attempts to modify the structure for fish and paddler passage have been unsuccessful. The General Filter/Hannum's Mill Dam is located slightly upstream of Sleepy Hollow Access. The 13th Street dam is located in North River Valley Park and owned by the City of Ames. Paddler hazard warning signs exist for all three obstructions. A portage route was constructed around the General Filter/Hannum's Mill and the 13th Street dam in 2013 by Conservation Corps volunteers and Iowa DNR staff.

Water Trail Experience Types

A set of Iowa criteria established in 2010 is applied to guide classification of state designated segments. This experience classification system allows paddlers to match water trail routes with their ability level. These criteria also help water trail managers, sponsors and trail volunteers select a classification assignment for each segment based on their management resources and abilities. State-designated water trails in Iowa are designed to provide four basic types of experiences: Gateway, Recreational, Challenge, and Wilderness.

- Gateway Experience Segments:

At normal flow conditions, these segments provide the most predictable experience for paddlers.

- Recreational Experience Segments:

Recreational experiences generally require more skill and experience compared to Gateway segments.

- Challenge Experience Segments:

These segments are not for beginners. At normal flow conditions, paddlers will experience a moderate to high number of hazards including logjams, rapids, the potential for high waves, or limited egress.

- Wilderness Experience Segments:

The goal of this classification is to provide users with all that is possible in the state in terms of wilderness experience with minimal human-made distractions and amenities.



According to the Water Trail Plan, the entire length of the South Skunk River in Story County can remain in its current classification as a Recreational use classification with one exception. The rapids created at the North River Valley Park dam modification site will likely create Challenge experience classification conditions. Additionally, with enhancement, one segment has the potential to be converted to a Gateway classification.

The Sleepy Hollow to North River Valley segment is an ideal length for a Gateway classification but requires enhancement. The 2.9 mile length of the segment makes it an ideal shorter distance for beginners and novices. Its juxtaposition in Ames relates well to the urban context, interpretation and service expectations of this experience classification. Upgrades would be necessary to both accesses as well as channel conditions.

The water trail for the South Skunk River spells out improvements of many kinds including larger parking lots and better accesses to the river. It also talks at length about the natural resources of the river.





From the Draft Water Trail Plan to be completed in 2016:

“As much as further developing recreation potential, the water trail sponsor (SCC) shares the values of resource protection held by the state program. They see one of the primary purposes of the water trail as a means to further conservation on and near the river and to communicate this to users. Conditions will be protected for the already high diversity of bird and mussel species. Greater attention on natural channel restoration to reduce mass channel wasting and mid-channel deposition will occur. And the expansion of diverse riparian plantings will create a continuous perennial buffer on the water trail route. In the long term, previously channelized segments of the river can serve as candidates for stream mitigation. Eventually, trail and greenspace connections between Ames and the Story - Polk county line along the South Skunk are desired. Additional goals include diverse resource enhancement of the river corridor including permanent protection of critical cultural and historic resources, river edge riparian forests, is to make gains in water quality enhancement in Story County. Bacteria and biologically impaired reaches of the river in Story County impact river users and have the potential to influence the quality of aquatic habitat.”



Source: Wagner, M., L. Buscher, J. Wilson. 2016. For the love of a river: South Skunk Water Trail Plan. Des Moines: Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Natural Resource and Recreation Inventory

Substantial information pertaining to Story County's geology, vegetation, soil, and wildlife has been gathered and analyzed to better understand the natural resources found under, on, and above the land surface. Recreation resources have also been mapped. To portray this information, a series of maps have been created, and will be elaborated upon further throughout the Chapter.

Use of the Inventory

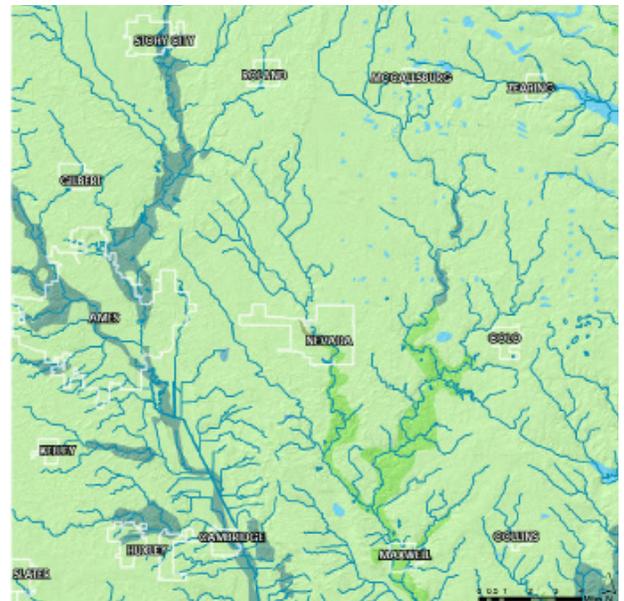
With the use of inventory data from the Story County GIS Department, as well as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources GIS Library (NRGIS), patterns of geographic significance become clear, and help aid in determining natural resource goals and opportunities as well as locations for future growth in Story County.

Utilizing this inventory data, the following maps were created:

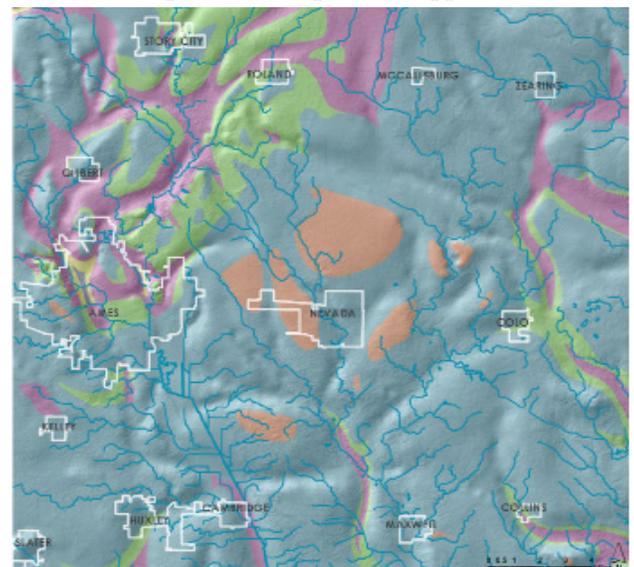
- City Annexation and Land Area Map
- Story County Base Map
- Existing Trails Map
- Surface Geology Map
- Bedrock Geology
- Slope Analysis Map
- Soil Types Map
- Soil Categories Map
- Soil-Based Corn Yield Map
- Soil-Based Soybean Yield Map
- Hydric Soils Map
- HUC 8 Watersheds Map
- HUC 10 Watersheds Map
- HUC 12 Watersheds Map
- Floodplains, Wind Turbines, and Quarries Map
- Greenways Map
- Historic Vegetation Types Map
- Current Land Cover Map
- Prairie Land Map
- Vegetation Type Map
- Aquifer Map
- Habitat Map
- Wildlife Corridors Map
- Drainage Districts Map
- Landscape Types Map
- Existing Land Use Map

The selection of resources for this study was based primarily on the availability of data and the significance of these resources in land planning.

Each of the maps in Appendix D is accompanied by a brief description, as well as a legend. This information is presented to help resource users gain a basic understanding of Story County's natural and recreation resources. This is one of the first steps in the process of future land use decision-making.



Story County Historic Vegetation
(Full Map and Description in Appendix D)



Story County Geology
(Full Map and Description in Appendix D)



Natural Resource Analysis

Information for this Chapter was gleaned from the August 1975 Natural Resource Analysis conducted for the county by the Land Use Analysis Laboratory. Findings presented in this analysis provided substantial base information and analysis for this inventory. Through more recent exploration and analysis, new findings have been discovered through this review process and are discussed below.

Land Cover

Through land cover analysis mapping, the historic land cover of Story County (1873) was much different than it is today. In 1873, as much as 332,505 acres of prairie existed, which encompasses over 90% of the Story County's land. Today, the majority of the land that was historically prairie has been converted into cropland.

Additionally, Story County historically had as much as 3,307 acres of marsh/wetland. Similar to the loss of prairie land, the majority of these wetlands were drained and converted into agricultural land. Therefore, one of the key conservation of natural resources goals of Story County is to protect and enhance the diversity, dynamics, distributions, habitats, and behaviors of Story County's native plant and animal populations.

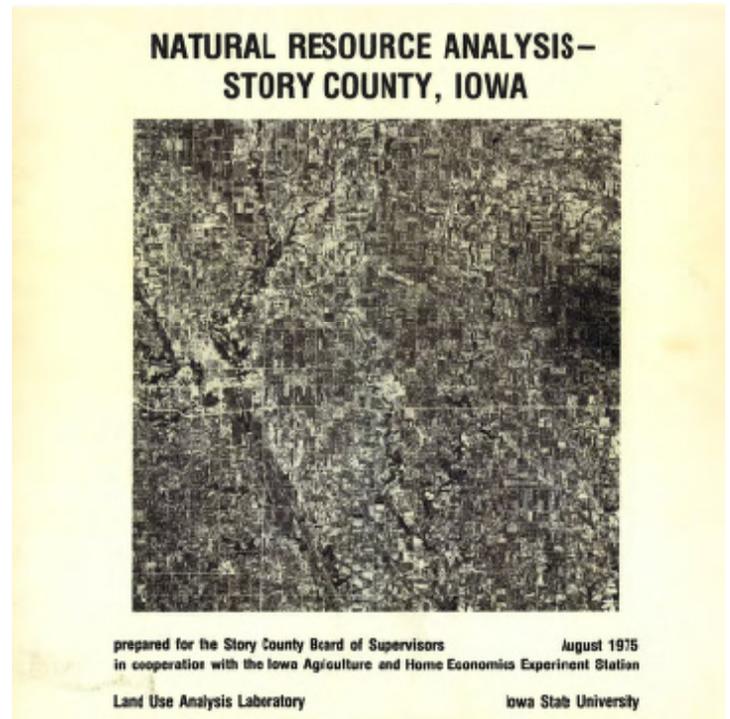
Water Quality

Another key finding has been the poor conditions of some of our county's water bodies. Impaired streams and rivers can be found on the Story County watershed maps, as well as on the Story County aquifer map.

To improve these conditions and prevent other water bodies from further degradation, Story County strives to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the ground water and surface waters through best management practices and conservation practices for agriculture.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Analysis maps helped identify environmentally sensitive areas within the County. This includes areas located within the floodplain, areas with particularly steep slopes, habitat areas, and areas with hydric soils. A thorough flora and fauna inventory of sensitive and potentially sensitive



1975 Story County Natural Resource Analysis



areas, which was not possible through GIS analysis, should be done. Story County will work to preserve, protect, and limit development within these identified areas.

Trails and Greenways

Through mapping the existing Story County trails and greenways, it has become evident that gaps within the trail system exist, and that certain areas of the County are not fully served.

As a result, a proposed trails and greenways expansion plan and map have been created based upon the input from community members, Conservation Board members, and various interest groups.

Residential and Commercial Development

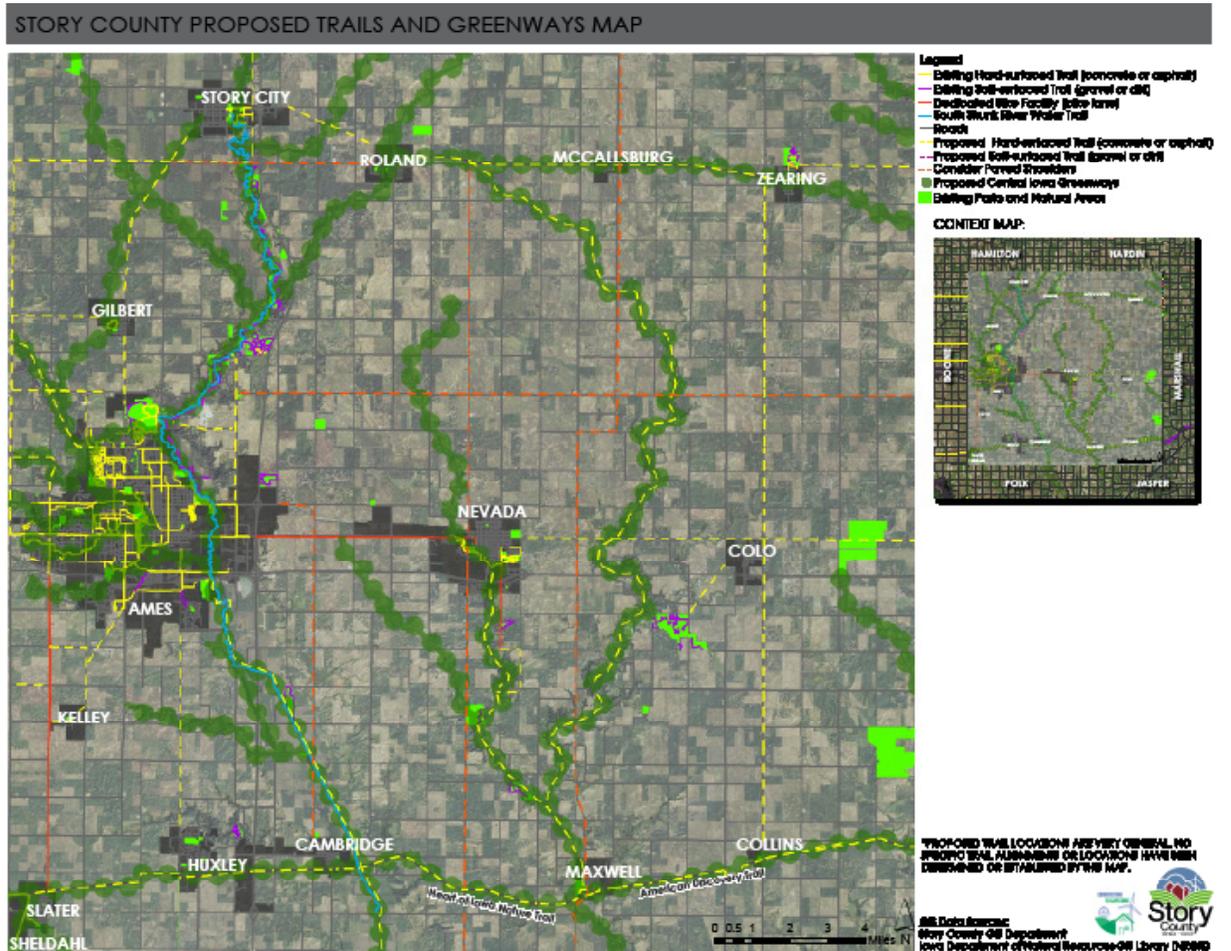
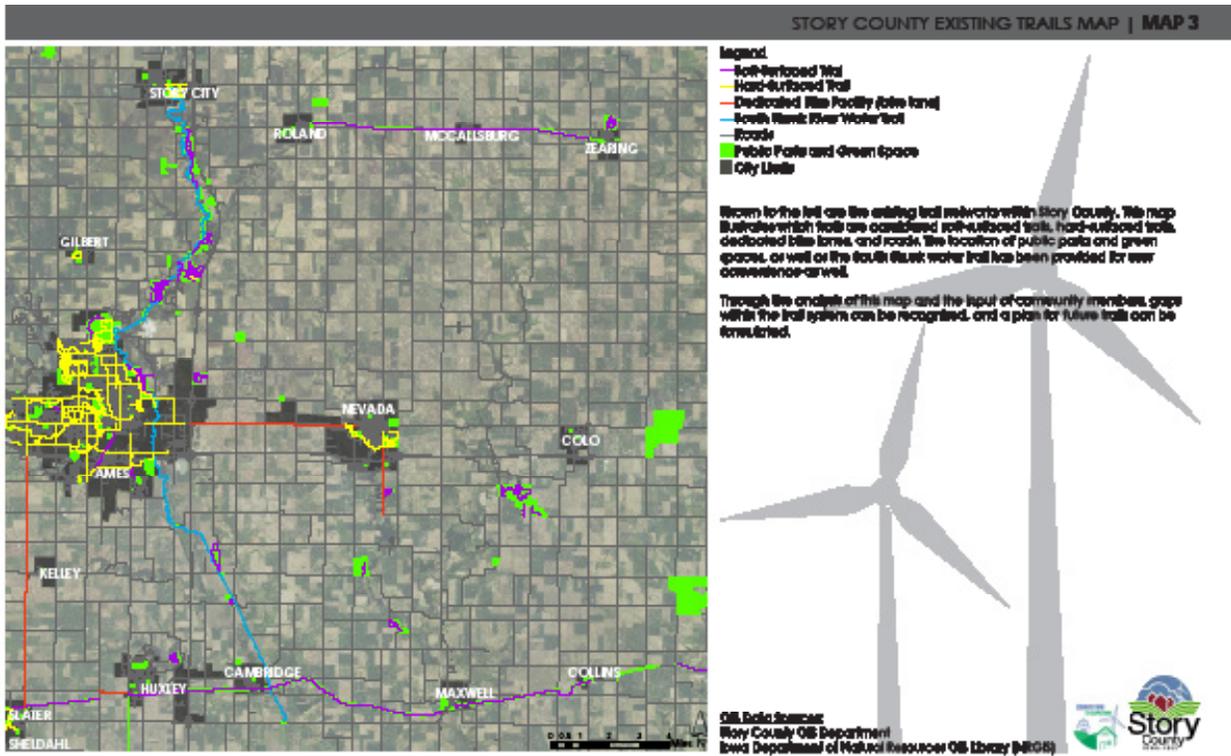
The inventory reveals the amount and patterns of growth and development that have occurred over time. As seen in the land cover and land use maps, a large amount of residential and commercial development has been established within municipalities. These developments often increase the amount of impervious surfaces in the county, increasing runoff and decreasing the quality of the natural environment.

Therefore, Story County strives for future development to be well-planned and aligned with smart growth principles and practices to preserve sensitive and agriculturally valuable land.

Soil

The analysis of county soils illustrates locations of valuable, nutrient rich soils that exist in much of Story County. The types and locations of these soils help determine where future growth and development should or should not occur. The analysis reveals areas of high potential for soil loss. Soil conservation practices should focus on these areas.





Conditions and Needs

The August 1975 Natural Resource Analysis served as the foundation for this Chapter, building upon the data and study assembled by its authors. Of particular note, the landscape type map was created based on the landscape types information and map from the 1975 analysis. The following section contains key findings and points that were made in the 1975 analysis.

“Land use planning at any level - local, multi-county, or statewide - must begin with a realistic inventory of natural resources to be matched against the needs and goals of the people. With data on kinds and amounts of land and water resources, on their suitability for different uses, and on their spatial relationships, it is possible to meet human and economic needs and at the same time maintain or improve the quality of the environment.”

(Upper Explorerland Resource Conservation and Development Project, Land Use Committee, 1973)

The following analysis of individual resources identified in areas of Story County may be important environmentally or economically; may contain either unique or non-renewable resources; or may impose development limitations.

Floodplains

Areas of greatest concern are primarily floodplains, with geologic and soil limitations; and valley walls, with geologic, soil, vegetation, and wildlife limitations. On the uplands, areas of greatest concern are the smaller and more discontinuous pothole, peat, and mulch areas, and the areas of tree cover, marsh, or prairie remnants.

Geologic Resources

The study of geologic resources is a necessary part of a natural resources assessment. The protection and use of Story County’s geologic resources depends not only on wise resource management, but also on the planning and location of future land uses.





Habitat

Existing woodland, marsh, and early successional areas are extremely important habitat types. These areas of low human use contain the greatest diversity of vegetation species and forms, and offer a variety of needed food and cover. Consequently, these areas which support the greatest wildlife populations and have the greatest species diversity should be protected.

Slopes

Development on steep slopes should be restricted because of erosion and slippage problems. Geologic, water, soil, vegetation, and wildlife resources provide the residents of Story County with the necessities of food and water, as well as scenic enjoyment and recreation opportunities.

Soil

Soil characteristics can often indicate potential hazards and costs associated with a particular development. Costs of land development could be minimized through proper use of soils information. Construction in areas of low bearing capacity may be more costly over time because buildings and roads may crack due to uneven settling. Low areas on the uplands are subject to short-term flooding, and the flood hazard on stream bottoms is even more severe.

Vegetation

In all vegetation planning and management decisions, the effects on soil and water resources should be of prime consideration. Vegetation is important as permanent cover, which protects soil and water resources by decreasing soil erosion and water runoff and by increasing infiltration. Invasive vegetation has a detrimental effect on native plant and wildlife communities. Invasive species should be removed or minimized.

Water

Potable water availability and quality are important considerations in resource planning. Because alluvial and buried channel aquifers provide approximately one-half of the public water supply in Story County, they are primary factors in directing future growth and ensuring that water remains a sustainable resource.

The objectives and strategies for preserving, protecting, and restoring Story County's natural resources strive to be similar to those declared in the California Environmental Quality Act:

“Take all action necessary to protect, rehabilitate and enhance the environmental quality of the state... Take all action necessary to provide the people of this state with clean air and water, enjoyment of aesthetic, natural, scenic, and historic environmental qualities, and freedom from excessive noise... Prevent the elimination of fish or wildlife species due to man's activities, ensure that fish and wildlife populations do not drop below self-perpetuating levels, and preserve for future generations representations of all plant and animal communities and examples of the major periods of California history... Ensure that long term protection of the environment shall be the guiding criterion in public decisions.”

(California Environmental Quality Act - Section 21000).

Together, the inventoried data, analysis, and studies can assist in planning for resource utilization, conservation, or preservation. As new land use issues and needs arise, the application of this system will help ensure a high quality natural environment and high quality of life for the people of Story County.