



State Highlights in Conservation: Iowa

Profile of State Program(s)

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Trust Fund:

The Trust Fund was established in 1981. It is funded through hunting and fishing license fees, fish and wildlife habitat stamps, boat, ATV and snowmobile registration fees, and miscellaneous sources such as state tax form donations. The Trust fund conducts land acquisition for vital habitat, as well as for fish and wildlife management and restoration, research, mitigation, law enforcement, outdoor education, and hatcheries.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP): Enacted in 1989, the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program is Iowa’s landmark environmental legislation. In 1996, the legislature extended the program’s life through 2021. The legislation authorizes a maximum appropriation of \$20 million a year, although funding averages about \$10 million a year. REAP funds are dispersed into a number of programs based on percentages, described below:

Open Spaces Protection – 28%

This funding is allocated to DNR for state acquisition of development of lands and waters. Half of the funding in this account is directed to land acquisition and half to facility developments. One-tenth of this funding is available for cost-share projects with private organizations. REAP provides 75 percent of the acquisition costs and the remaining 25 percent comes from private contributions. DNR owns and manages the jointly purchased property. One-twentieth of this fund is used to implement the state’s Protected Water Areas program (PWA), which acquires land along designated rivers to maintain their scenic and natural quality. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources pay property taxes on land purchased with REAP open space funds with funding from the REAP Open Space account.

City Parks and Open Space – 15%

Available to cities through competitive grants. Parkland expansion and multi-purpose recreation developments are typically funded, although funds are not available for organized sports facilities such as baseball diamonds or soccer fields. The amount of funding available a city

depends on population and grants are awarded in three categories based on city size to ensure that municipalities of varying size receive funds. Local matching funds are not required.

County Conservation – 20%

Funding is available to counties for acquisition, easement, capital improvements, natural resource restoration, facility improvement, and environmental education. Athletic facilities are not eligible for funding. Funding is distributed to three categories.

- 30 percent is allocated equally to all 99 counties.
- 30 percent is allocated based on population. Counties are eligible to receive this funding only if they dedicate at least 22 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value of taxable property in the county for county conservation purposes. Counties with larger populations receive more money than counties with smaller populations.
- 40 percent is available to counties through a competitive grant process. The 22-cent eligibility requirement applies to these grants. Local matching funds are not required.

Soil and Water Enhancement – 20%

This funding is available to landowners for soil and water conservation and enhancement projects and practices. Project money is directed towards protecting the state’s surface and ground water resources from point and non-point sources of contamination. Practices money is directed towards reforestation, woodland protection and enhancement, wildlife habitat preservation and enhancement, protection of highly erodible soils, and water quality protection. Soil Conservation Districts designate high priority watersheds in which REAP funds can be expended. Districts may also designate animal waste management as a priority.

Roadside Vegetation – 3%

This money is available through the Iowa Department of Transportation’s Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF) for integrated roadside vegetation management activities, including the establishment of native prairie vegetation in rights-of-way.

Historical Resources – 5%

Grants support projects for historic preservation, libraries, and archives.

Land Management – 9%

Besides direct appropriation, REAP utilizes a combination of funding sources including lottery sales, the general fund, and environmental license plate sales. REAP provides money for projects through state agency budgets or in the form of grants. The REAP program encourages extensive public participation at the county, regional and statewide levels.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Other: This includes acquisitions made with funding from other sources including the Destination Park Bond, Forestry Bureau, Lake Restoration Program, Marine Fuel Tax Fund, and with mitigation and restitution revenue.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – State Revolving Fund: Several programs use state revolving funds for land acquisition.

- Clean Water State Revolving Fund, for publicly owned wastewater facilities, when the land is “integral to the treatment process.” It does not include land on which treatment facilities will be sited.
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, for public water supplies. Land can be purchased for siting of water facilities as long as there is a willing seller. Land or conservation easements can also be purchased through source water protection loans.
- The General Non-Point Source Program provides low-interest loans to applicants that are owners of record or have long-term control of the property where the project is to be implemented. Priority projects include but are not limited to: restoration of wildlife habitat; stream bank stabilization; urban stormwater management; remediation of storage tanks; water conservation and reuse; and wetland flood prevention areas, which includes land acquisition. Loans can also be made for the water quality components of other projects, such as municipal landfill closure, brownfield remediation, bird sanctuaries, and urban stormwater measures. Loan amount can be up to 100% of the project costs with a minimum loan of \$10,000. Loan terms can be up to 10 years.

I-JOBS Initiative: In 2008, the Iowa legislature passed, in conjunction with the administration of then-Governor Culver – passed an \$830 million initiative to create and support jobs in the state of Iowa, boost the economy, and help the state recover from natural disasters. A small portion of this funding went to land conservation.

Substantial State Investment

The state of Iowa is authorized to appropriate \$20 million per year until 2021 to the REAP program, however it has only realized that level of funding in just one year (1991) since its inception in 1989. Originally, REAP was authorized to received \$30 million per year for 10 years, however in 1996 the state legislature changed the maximum appropriation from \$30 million to \$20 million per year and extended the program’s life to 2021. In recent years the state legislature has set the amount of the REAP program funding at \$10 million from the general fund. Interest from the REAP account and receipts from the sale of natural resource license plates add about \$1 million to this appropriation for a total of \$11 million a year.

In 2008 and 2009, the Iowa legislature passed legislation to allow Iowa voters to decide on a constitutional amendment to create a dedicated trust fund to benefit natural resources. In November 2010, Iowa voters approved the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, which will be funded by the revenues from a future increase in the state sales tax. As of 2016, the increase has not occurred and the trust fund remains unfunded.

State Incentive for Local Conservation Funding

In addition the REAP grants and budgeting incentives previously discussed, Iowa DNR also makes available funding assistance for land acquisition for fish habitat and wildlife habitat.

Public-Private Partnerships

As previously mentioned, the REAP program encourages public-private partnerships. Organizations such as the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Ducks Unlimited partner with the state to conserve land.

Local Financing Enabled

Local governments in Iowa have the authority to issue general obligation bonds, increase property taxes, or use a portion of the local option sales tax for the acquisition of land to use as open space and parks. In 2001, the citizens of Ames, Iowa (Story County) became the first municipality to pass a voter-approved bond for open space and parks. Voters in Johnson and Polk counties subsequently passed bond measures in 2008 and 2012, respectively. Johnson and Polk counties subsequently passed.

In 1955, the Iowa legislature passed the county conservation law. All 99 counties in Iowa subsequently established county conservation programs. A conservation board oversees a county’s museum, park, preserve, parkway, recreation and other conservation facilities. The conservation board may acquire land. The board of supervisors in a county may establish funding for the conservation board, including for acquisition and

capital improvement projects. As mentioned elsewhere, the REAP program provides financial incentives to counties that establish funding above a certain level.

Local Programs Included

Data for the Conservation Almanac has not yet been collected for local measures approved by voters in Iowa. Visit www.landvote.org for more information.

Federal Partnerships

Federal agencies and programs that have conserved land in Iowa include:

- U.S. Department of Transportation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Pittman Robertson
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Section 6 Grant
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – State Wildlife Grant Program
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program (Dingell Johnson)
- U.S. Forest Service – Forest Legacy Program (FLP)
- U.S. National Park Service – Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service



The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

The Conservation Almanac

A comprehensive database of land conservation and public conservation funding in America, the Conservation Almanac provides a context for assessing impacts of conservation and the growing conservation finance movement. The Almanac offers information on public dollars spent and acres conserved, details on local, state, and federal conservation programs, and geospatial mapping of conserved land.

Almanac data collection efforts focus on land conserved using public dollars; contributions funded by private and non-governmental organizations are not tracked comprehensively. Federal data is complete from 1998-2017. State and local data is complete from 1998-2015. In the tables and charts below, acres are allocated to each program proportionate to the size of the contributions to each acquisition. For example, if an acquisition had two contributions, and each program contributed equal dollar amounts, each program receives 50% of the acres. If you have questions or want to provide updated information, please contact Jessica Welch at jessica.welch@tpl.org.

www.tpl.org

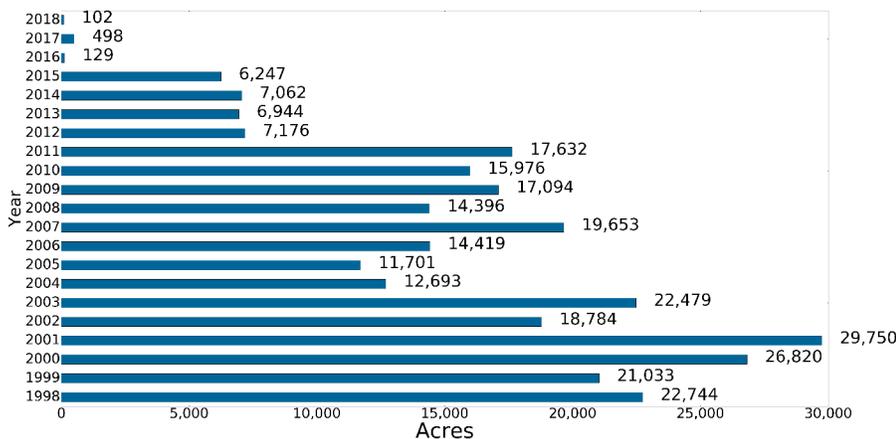
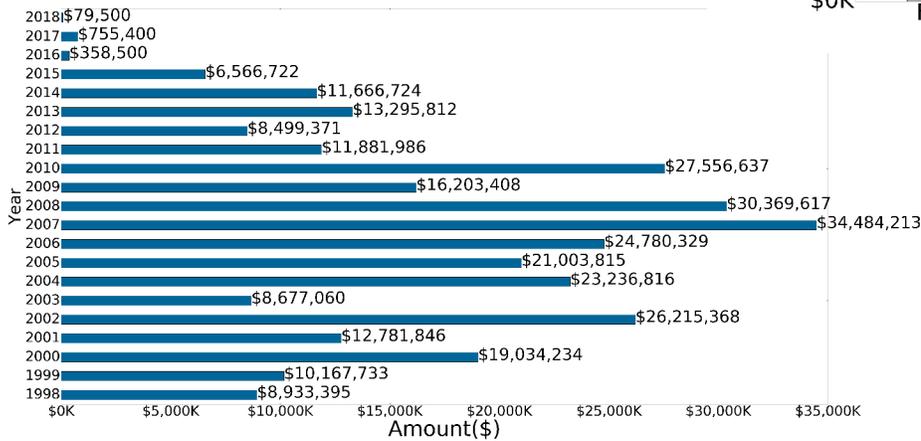
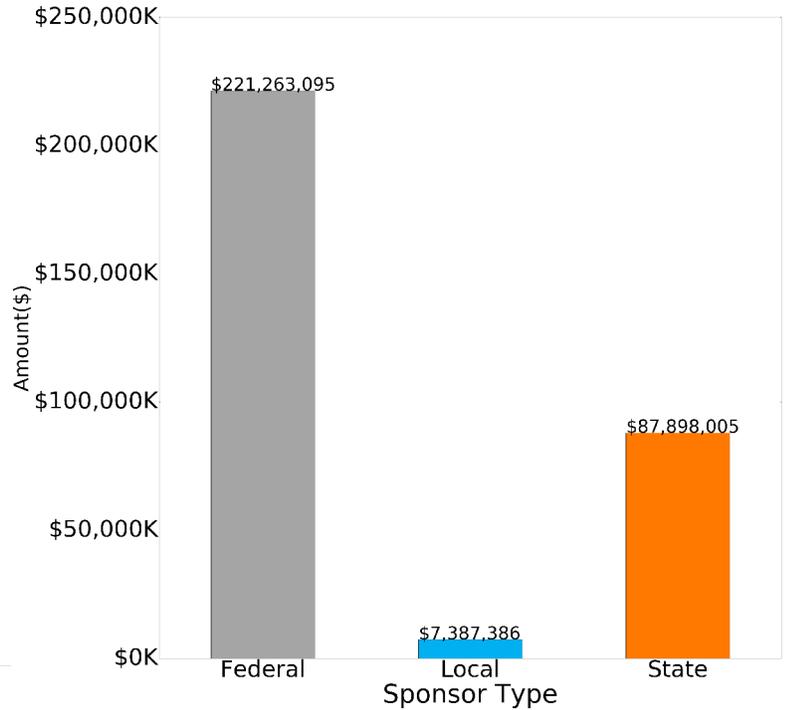
www.conservationalmanac.org

State Conservation Report Iowa



CONSERVATION ALMANAC
Tracking Investments in Protected Lands

November 20, 2020



The data in the Conservation Almanac track the impacts of public spending on land conservation. Created by The Trust for Public Land, the Conservation Almanac brings those data together along with state policy profiles, current conservation finance news, and an interactive map, to provide a powerful online tool.