Iowa's County Conservation System

Why County Conservation Matters

mycountyparks.com

Since 1955

Building on the historic successes of acquiring, developing, and making available county parks, preserves, playgrounds, forests, wildlife, and other conservation areas; promoting and preserving the health and general welfare of the people; encouraging the orderly development and conservation of natural resources; and cultivating quality of life by providing programs of public recreation and outdoor conservation education.

October 2026

QUALITY OF LIFE & HEALTHY LIFE STYLES

COUNTY CONSERVATION OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPERIENCES

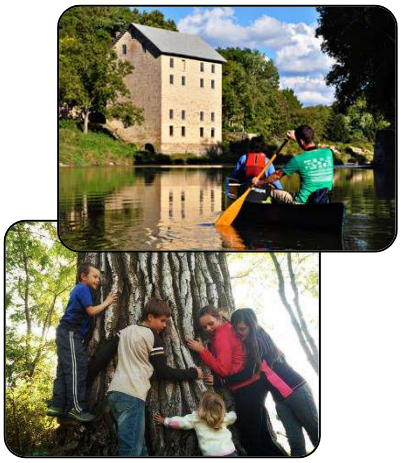
24+ Million Annual Visitors

699,993 Campers utilize 11,111 campsites annually

2,987,817 Trail Users visit 1,949 miles of trails annually

Hundreds of thousands of hunters utilize 146,262 acres of hunting lands

755,000 people attend nearly 27,000 public programs annually



County Conservation creates & supports healthy life style opportunities to keep people healthy from their wonder years to their golden years.

$609+ Million of Annual Economic Impact

Camping generates $45.87million in local spending around Iowa

Trail Users spend $28.68 million collectively in 99 counties

Hunters generate $63.77 million via local spending

5,800 jobs are supported by associated spending while using county parks

Both rural and urban counties enjoy increased local spending by residents and visitors due to the presence of local county parks and facilities.

Generating Jobs – Putting People to Work

752 Professional Permanent Staff - 100 Directors, 132 Park Rangers, 125 Naturalists, 23 Field Specialists, 88 Administrative & Office Staff, 38 Operation Supervisors, and 222 Natural Resource and Field Technicians

400 Seasonal and Part-time Employees

Annual Statewide County Conservation Permanent Employee Payroll - $40,624,470

No two counties are the same – the organization and structure of individual county conservation boards are tailored to fit local characteristics, public need for services & opportunities, and available fiscal organization.

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Weaving the Fabric of a Statewide Network

ICCS, along with many of our professional county conservation staff are key assets to an integrated network of public & private partnerships and stakeholder organizations. County Conservation leadership is provided by listening to our members, patrons and supporters – and responding in a timely, responsible and skillful manner. Our joint successes have cemented our resolve to continue. We know that we don't have to do this by ourselves.

One Incredible Infrastructure

Along the way, these first **71 years** – our county conservation program has grown exponentially. Public use and service facilities now account for $1.25 Billion in collective statewide assets. *(excluding land)* Including: 75 visitor/nature centers, 464 shop/service buildings, 675 pedestrian bridges, 415 dams, 349 playgrounds, 154 shower houses, 100 office buildings, 764 shelters, 496 fishing piers/docks, 250+ camping cabins, 725 restrooms, etc.

Counties are the driving force in naturally connecting communities via land & water trail systems. Maintaining this infrastructure will be a challenge in the years ahead.

The Winning Formula for 71 Years of Success

Local Control, **Local** Ownership, **Local** Funding & Support, **Local** Partnerships

A majority vote of the people at a general election in each county was required to establish their local county conservation board. In many cases, these majorities were well in excess of 75%. From those beginnings – the success of each CCB has been locally generated and driven. And collectively, since 1959 - the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards (IACCB) has flourished with the support of these 99 partnerships. Our statewide footprint is important to the future of Iowa!

It's hard to imagine where Iowa would be without county conservation – thousands of acres would still be unprotected, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities would have been missed, and those bridges we have collectively built for others to follow would be far shorter and fewer.

The Mission of IACCB – *To promote the objectives and supplement the activities of conservation boards, provide information networking, to assist boards and members in program development, to promote and market Iowa's County Conservation System, to foster board member & staff education, and to provide a unified voice in the Iowa legislature.*

Iowa's County Conservation System
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