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**ANNUAL** | JULY 1, 2016 -  
**REPORT FY2017** | JUNE 30, 2017

*Linn County Conservation Board*

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Publication Authorized by Chapter 350, Code of Iowa

## **CHAPTER 350.1 CODE OF IOWA, PURPOSES COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARDS**

The purpose of this chapter is to create a county conservation board and to authorize counties to acquire, develop, maintain, and make available to the inhabitants of the county, public museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreation centers, county forests, wildlife and other conservation areas, and to promote and preserve the health and general welfare of the people to encourage the orderly development and conservation of natural resources, and to cultivate good citizenship by providing adequate programs of public recreation.

## **NOTICE OF BOARD MEETINGS**

Monthly meetings of the County Conservation Board are usually scheduled for the fourth Monday of each month. Other meetings are called as needed. All meetings are open to the public. Public notice is given for all meetings.



# Leadership



## Conservation Board - FY 2017

Left to right: George Kanz, Cindy Burke, Hillary Hughes, John Hanson (appointed January, 2017), Steve Emerson

### *Our Mission is to:*

- protect natural resources;*
- promote health and wellness;*
- strengthen safety and security;*
- support economic development;*
- increase environmental awareness;*
- provide outdoor recreational experiences;*
- foster human development; and*
- strengthen community image and sense of place.*



## Linn County Board of Supervisors

Jim Houser	District 1
Stacey Walker	District 2
Ben Rogers	District 3
Brent Oleson	District 4
John Harris	District 5

Kristin Eschweiler  
5 year term  
expired Dec. 31, 2016.

### *Our Vision:*

*To improve community through people, parks, trails and open space.*



Conservation Board  
Linn County, Iowa

10260 Morris Hills Road  
Toddville, Iowa 52341-9604



January 22, 2018

John Harris, Chairperson  
Linn County Board of Supervisors  
Jean Oxley Public Service Center  
935 Second Street SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404-2161

Subject: Conservation Board Annual Report FY2017

Dear Supervisor Harris:

The Linn County Conservation Board is pleased to present its Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 annual report. During FY 2017, the Conservation Board met in 14 sessions to establish policy and provide guidance to the Linn County Conservation program, including a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors. We appreciate the opportunity to meet with the Supervisors to discuss goals, priorities and matters of mutual interest involving the Linn County Conservation program.

The Conservation Board continues to place a high priority on leveraging local dollars appropriated by the Board of Supervisors with grants and other support. The ability to leverage local dollars with grant funds allows us to complete important projects at a lower cost to the people of Linn County. We appreciate your continued support toward investment in conservation and outdoor recreation.

In November 2016, Linn County Voters approved the Linn County Water and Land Legacy bond with 73.9% approval to help protect sources of drinking water and address the quality of water in our rivers and streams, protect natural areas for floodwater storage and wildlife habitat, and to improve our county park system and trails toward the future. Project planning, which has included identifying additional funding sources to leverage bond funds, has also been a substantial part of this process. Initial projects to involve bond funds have been reviewed by the Linn County Bond Public Review Board this past October. We look forward to meeting with the Board of Supervisors to ask for issuance of bonds toward these initial projects in coming months. In addition, we look forward to the opportunity to assist in additional natural resource protections along the Squaw Creek Corridor with your recent land purchase from the Dows Sutherland Family Trust.

This report provides you with highlights of the Conservation Board's activities during FY 2017. We place a strong emphasis on maintaining areas entrusted to us to a high standard to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for our customers. In addition to required and necessary maintenance activities, we constantly explore new opportunities and needs that are currently unmet in Linn County. Many of these accomplishments for FY 2017 are noted within this report, including:

- 10 acres of woodland acquired to expand the Matsell Bridge Natural Area, as well as 51 acres to the Chain Lakes Natural Area. Both areas are open for public hunting. An additional one-acre inholding at Pini con Ridge Park property was acquired adjacent to the Wapsipinicon River. Nearly 13 acres was added to Morgan Creek Park for future park use.
- A second single-track/mountain bike trail at Squaw Creek Park was completed.
- We assisted the Center Point Community Historical Society with relocation of a historic settler cabin in Center Point to an area next to the Historical Society Museum at the Cedar Valley Nature Trail.
- Staff began construction on Wickiup's Wandering Woods, a children's nature playscape adjacent to the Wickiup Hill Learning Center.
- Hard surfacing of the Hoover Nature Trail from Ely city limits to the Johnson County line was completed. This trail is now open and is enjoying heavy use by trail enthusiasts.
- Construction began on a new bridge over West Blue Creek along the Cedar Valley Nature trail, which replaces a 100+ year-old railroad bridge. Hard surfacing was also completed along the trail from Schultz Road through Center Point.
- We continue our partnership with Monarch Research Project and other entities to help re-establish pollinators within Linn County.

A recent significant milestone and transition is the retirement of our second Executive Director Dan Biechler on January 12, 2018. Dan was a member of the Conservation Department for the past 42 years, and served as Executive Director since 1988. The remarkable accomplishments for the department over the past 30 years are certainly a testament to his leadership. As the Board is thoughtfully addressing the transition to our third Executive Director, we continue to value your steadfast support.

With your continued assistance, Conservation Board leadership, and the hard work of our staff, we remain committed to meeting goals of making Linn County a better place to live, work, and visit.

Very truly yours,



Hillary Hughes, President  
Linn County Conservation Board



The Linn County Water and Land Legacy received

**73.9%**

voter approval on November 8, 2016

60% majority vote was required for passage

**79 of 86**

Linn County voting precincts passed the measure with over 60% approval

18 voting precincts approved the measure with over

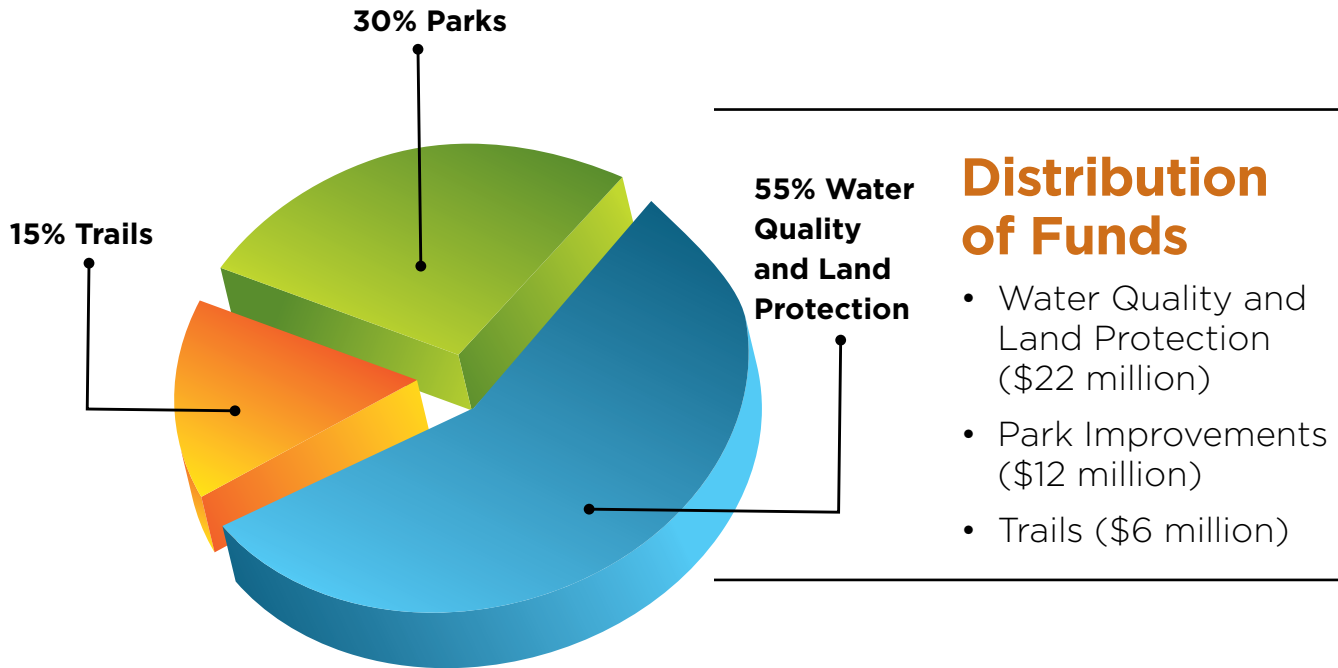
**78% approval.**

## Voters pass Linn County Water and Land Legacy \$40 million bond issue

The Conservation Board has been planning for the future of the Linn County conservation system the past several years. During these discussions, many conservation and natural resource issues have been identified: declining water quality in rivers and streams with potential impact to drinking water supplies; loss of wetland resulting in reduced flood-water storage; and opportunities to naturally cleanse water, loss of wildlife habitat, needed county park improvements, and making trail connections to communities within the county.

Linn County residents overwhelmingly passed the Linn County Water and Land Legacy November 8, 2016 with 73.9% approval to issue general obligation bonds to address these needs. This level of support highlights the importance Linn County residents place on water quality, natural resources, parks and trails. The issuance of bonds will create \$40 million for the purposes of protecting sources of drinking water and the water quality of rivers and streams. Acquiring and protecting natural areas for floodwater storage and wildlife habitat is also part of this effort. Park improvements and trails are guided by Master Plans (online at [www.linncountyparks.com](http://www.linncountyparks.com)). The Linn County Conservation Board will oversee and direct all of these components of the bond.

Prior to the election, the Linn County Board of Supervisors and Linn County Conservation Board each passed resolutions targeting dollars toward these initiatives. 55% of bond funds will be directed toward Land Protection and Water Quality (\$22 million) projects over the life of the bond; 30% toward park improvements (\$12 million), and 15% toward trails (\$6 million). The work of project planning and implementation began soon after the election. Several meetings have been taking place with potential project partners, with the goal of maximizing the return on investment to ensure bond funding is leveraged through grants and donations to the largest extent possible. Projects with the highest priority are those involving water and land protection. There are several projects that will be developed on county-owned land that will store water during rains, reduce runoff and clean it before release into streams or rivers. Due to the complexity of securing additional Federal, State, and local funds, as well as proper permits, many of the water quality projects may take longer to finalize. A five-year strategic plan to implement bond-funded projects is also being developed by the Board. The Conservation Board anticipates the first bond dollars to be issued during Fiscal Year 2018.

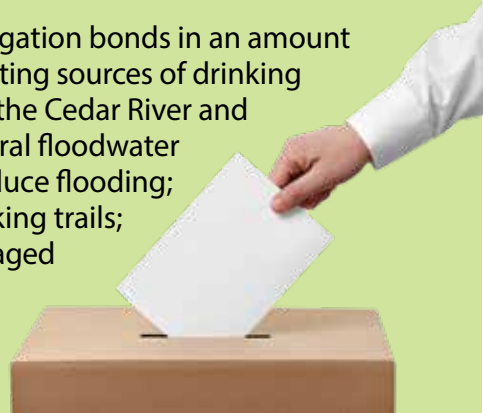


Following the successful ballot passage, the Linn County Board of Supervisors created a bond public review board, independent of the Conservation Board, with the charge of confirming that projects using bond dollars meet the intent of the ballot language\*. The Conservation Board continues to consider plans, specifications, and cost estimates for Linn County Water and Land Legacy Bond initiatives. Updates are posted at [www.linncountyparks.com](http://www.linncountyparks.com). Conservation Board public meetings are usually held the 4th Monday of every month at Wickiup Hill Learning Center. To view agenda, minutes, and to receive alerts about Board meetings, go to [www.linncounty.org/agendacenter](http://www.linncounty.org/agendacenter)

## \*Linn County Water and Land Legacy ballot

"Shall the County of Linn, State of Iowa, issue its general obligation bonds in an amount not exceeding forty million dollars for the purposes of protecting sources of drinking water and the water quality of rivers and streams, including the Cedar River and its tributaries; protecting and acquiring land to provide natural floodwater storage, improve water quality, protect natural areas and reduce flooding; providing funds to improve parks; providing biking and walking trails; and protecting wildlife habitat and natural areas, to be managed by the Linn County Conservation Board, with full public disclosure of all expenditures?"

(73.9% approval by Linn County voters November 8, 2016)



## AT A GLANCE



It is estimated there were over

**958,000 visitors\***

to Morgan Creek, Pinicon Ridge, and Squaw Creek Parks, as well as Wickiup Hill Learning Center

\*Based in part by car counters installed at park areas and counter inside Wickiup Hill



Conservation Board Established	1958
First Meeting	January 6, 1959
Population of Linn County	217,000
Area of Linn County	458,752 acres
Linn County Park Area	7,456 acres
Number of County Park Areas	28
Largest Area - Matsell Bridge Natural Area	1,912
Smallest Area - Abbe Creek School Museum	2 acres
Most Recently Acquired - Buffalo Creek Natural Area	75 acres
First Area Acquired - Mount Hope Public Use Area (1959) <i>(now part of Matsell Bridge Natural Area)</i>	15 acres

### Breakdown of Areas

Parks, 2,102 acres	4
Natural Areas, 4,737 acres	17
Preserves, 490 acres	5
Historic Sites, 9 acres	2
Area Open to Hunting, 4,171 acres	12
Number of Lodges	5
Number of Shelters (reservable)	6
Number of Cabins	5
Family Campgrounds	6
Campground Capacity (units)	450
Group Campgrounds	9
Number of Trails	32
Miles of Trails	110
Newest Trail - Hoover Trail	2 miles
Longest Trail - Cedar Valley Nature Trail	26 miles

### Shortest Trails

Ennis Trail	3/4 mile
Arboretum Trail	3/4 mile
Woodpecker Hill Trail	3/4 mile

Linn County Conservation continues to connect with the public via the Oak Hickory newsletter three times a year, as well as frequent E-news blasts and social media posts.



# RESERVABLE

# Facilities

	Reservations			FY 15	Revenue	
	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17		FY 15	FY 16
<b>PINICON RIDGE PARK</b>						
Horseshoe Falls Lodge	67	66	74	\$ 14,966.00	\$ 14,771.00	\$ 16,918.00
Woodpecker Lodge	70	75	80	\$ 11,502.00	\$ 9,702.00	\$ 11,822.00
Eagle View Shelter	42	17	26	\$ 1,320.00	\$ 1,015.00	\$ 1,320.00
Flying Squirrel Shelter			3			\$ 150.00
Riverside Shelter	38	38	40	\$ 2,380.00	\$ 2,020.00	\$ 1,935.00
White Oak Shelter						
Aspen Cabin	38	44	43	\$ 7,770.00	\$ 5,530.00	\$ 8,070.00
Bobwhite Cabin	45	46	37	\$ 8,260.00	\$ 7,105.00	\$ 6,790.00
Pintail Cabin	46	46	47	\$ 9,415.00	\$ 9,740.00	\$ 8,810.00
River Otter Cabin	33	34	30	\$ 6,213.00	\$ 3,700.00	\$ 3,825.00
Group Camps	116	113	123	\$ 9,597.00	\$ 13,108.00	\$ 12,241.00
<b>BUFFALO CREEK PARK</b>						
Hickory Hill Shelter	9	4	4	\$ 240.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 120.00
<b>MORGAN CREEK PARK</b>						
Morgan Creek Shelter	62	47	56	\$ 3,260.00	\$ 2,660.00	\$ 2,670.00
Group Camp	13	15	15	\$ 1,013.00	\$ 1,134.00	\$ 658.00
<b>MATSELL BRIDGE</b>						
Red Oak Cabin	42	45	52	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 4,825.00	\$ 5,310.00
<b>SQUAW CREEK PARK</b>						
Prairie Oak Lodge	141	158	140	\$ 62,868.00	\$ 54,871.00	\$ 43,925.00
Red Cedar Lodge	152	88	38*	\$ 38,325.00	\$ 13,765.00	\$ 48,495.00
Meadowlark Shelter	65	71	53	\$ 3,745.00	\$ 3,495.00	\$ 3,140.00
Squaw Creek Loop A	605	748	788	\$ 89,240.00	\$ 79,694.00	\$ 99,780.00
*Open March, 2017						
<b>WICKIUP HILL</b>						
Pack-in campsite			4			\$ 100.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>1655</b>	<b>1653</b>	<b>\$ 273,314.00</b>	<b>\$ 227,225.00</b>	<b>\$ 276,079.00</b>



The geocaching recreational activity Linn Parks Challenge ([linnparkschallenge.org](http://linnparkschallenge.org)) continued, which connects the public to 25 Linn County Conservation areas

# Highlights

## LINN COUNTY CONSERVATION LAND UNITS

NO.	OFFICIAL ACRES	NAME
2		Abbe Creek School Museum
70		Blue Creek Natural Area
75		Buffalo Creek Natural Area
128		Buffalo Creek Park
318		Cedar Valley Natural Trail
454		Chain Lakes Natural Area
269		Goose Pond Natural Area
100		Grant Wood Trail
80		Harold & Ruth Rehrauer Natural Area
156		Hitaga Sand Ridge Prairie Preserve
27		Hoover Nature Trail
33		J. Harold Ennis Preserve
7		Jay G. Sigmund Memorial Site
10		Millard Preserve
56		North Cedar Natural Area
37		Otter Creek Natural Area
162		Palisades-Dows Preserve
144		Palo Marsh Natural Area
5		Paris Bridge Natural Area
966		Pinicon Ridge Park
1912		Matsell Bridge Natural Area
316		Morgan Creek Park
120		Rock Island Botanical Preserve
162		South Cedar Natural Area
692		Squaw Creek Park
10		Troy Mills River Access
394		Wakpicada Natural Area
751		Wickiup Hill Natural Area
<b>7,456</b>		

Linn County Conservation land areas are divided into three districts: North Cedar, South Cedar, and Wapsipinicon. Each district has a resource manager (park ranger), assistant resource manager, and resource technicians. These employees provide customer service to park users, as well as maintenance of campsites, reservable lodges, shelters, trails, boat ramps/river access, and other conservation locations. Each district provides law enforcement and conducts other seasonal activities including snow removal, painting, weed removal or spraying (when applicable), and hazard tree removal. The Natural Resources unit assists in protecting, preserving and enhancing the natural resources of Linn County through conservation practices. The administrative team supports reservations, accounts payable, special programs, and implementation of County and Conservation Board policy.

Over 90% (7,000 acres) in the county park system remain natural and undeveloped. The land is enhanced by conducting prairie management, tree and shrub planting, wetland development and management, timber stand improvement and enhancement, as well as the maintenance of 15 food plots totaling 35 acres for wildlife. The latest techniques, methods, and best management practices are used with the goal of providing quality habitat and reestablish native ecosystems when possible.

The Services work unit supports all work units in areas of construction, maintenance, and operations. This included preparation and application of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 seal coat program on appropriate asphalt based pavements at County Conservation managed areas.

The Conservation Education team (naturalists) provides programming at the Wickiup Hill Learning Center, county parks, and off site areas around the region for all ages.

### Highlights within Linn County Conservation’s parks, trails, natural areas, and preserves:

#### BUFFALO CREEK PARK

Dam modification of the 48-year-old Buffalo Creek Park Dam continued, starting with partial removal. Additional dam removal and installation of rock arch rapids takes place in FY 2018.



#### CEDAR VALLEY NATURE TRAIL

Hard surfacing from Schultz Road south of Center Point 3.5 miles to Ash Lane (phase 4) was completed. The West Blue Creek Bridge replacement began in the winter, continuing through the summer.

#### E911

Pinicon Ridge park roads and facilities were adjusted to conform to Linn County Emergency Management’s 9-1-1 address system.



### **FLOODING**

Staff assisted Linn County in sandbag efforts to protect the Linn County Sheriff’s Office and Jail, while Pinicon Ridge Park staff prepared for high waters. Flood repairs took place at Morgan Creek County Park, Chain Lakes Natural Area, and Pinicon Ridge Park.

### **HAZARD TREES**

102 trees were marked, removed, and processed into firewood as part of the hazard tree program.

### **MANAGED DEER HUNT**

The managed deer hunt at Squaw Creek Park October 1 through January 10 harvested 15 deer: 11 does, one button buck, and three bucks.



### **OPERATION RELIEF**

For the 29th straight year, nearly 1,000 trees were sold and distributed to residents during two events in partnership with Alliant Energy and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.



### **POLLINATOR MIX**

140 acres of pollinator mixed prairie were planted at Matsell Bridge Natural Area, Morgan Creek Park, and Squaw Creek Park in partnership with the Monarch Research Project to improve and restore pollinator habitat.

### **MOUNTAIN BIKE/SINGLE TRACK TRAIL EXTENSION**

A second segment of just over two miles was added to Squaw Creek Park, bringing the total miles of single-track trail to nearly five.

### **NORTH CEDAR BOAT RAMP**

The shoreline renovation facet for the Boat Ramp project at the North Cedar Natural Area was completed, with boat ramp construction scheduled for FY 18.



### **OXBOW RECONSTRUCTION**

An oxbow was reconstructed at Morgan Creek Park near 80th Street in August of 2016. Oxbows, once abundant in Iowa’s native landscape, provides backwaters for habitat for fish and wildlife and floodwater storage. This restoration, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is creating fish habitat and helping improve water quality within Morgan Creek and the Cedar River Watershed.

# Highlights (continued)

## PRAIRIE MANAGEMENT

Over 270 acres of prairie were managed through prescribed burning, mowing, and removal of invasive species.



### RED CEDAR LODGE

New Red Cedar Lodge at Squaw Creek Park reopened in March after a year of construction. The new state of the art facility replaces a 40-year-old structure with air conditioning, ADA compliant kitchen and restrooms, and a modern look. Staff installed several exterior amenities including security lighting and hand railings for ADA accessibility.

### SQUAW CREEK PARK RANGER RESIDENCE

included a total basement remodel for the 60 year old home.

## SQUAW CREEK PARK RACES

6th Annual Squaw Creek Army Challenge was held in August, with nearly 1500 community participants. Freeze Fest was held at the park in early 2017 in conjunction with the Cedar Valley Running Association involving 400 runners.

## STORAGE FACILITIES

Sites were prepared for the installation of new wood and trailer storage facility at Morgan Creek and Pinicon Ridge Parks. As the new Pinicon Ridge Park shop was completed, buildings and concrete debris from the old shop and service area were removed. Grading occurred for the new service yard.



## SWENSON RETIRES

Steve Swenson, longtime park ranger (resource manager) at Morgan Creek retired after 36 years with Linn County Conservation. Shaun Reilly, assistant resource manager to Swenson for past 35 years, was named to the post. Josh Fossum was hired as assistant resource manager.



## WICKIUP'S WANDERING WOODS CHILDREN'S NATURAL PLAYSCAPE

Staff began the installation of features and elements associated with the children's natural playscape project at the Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Area.



## PACK-IN GROUP CAMPSITE AT WICKIUP HILL OUTDOOR LEARNING AREA

Development included a fabricated "wickiup", fire ring, and ADA accessible platform for tent, with the first reservation occurring the first weekend in April.

## Volunteers

The contributions from volunteers for Linn County Conservation amounted to more than 5,270 hours. Volunteers donate their time and talents toward a wide variety of programs, including staffing the Wickiup Hill Learning Center on weekends, planting and mulching trees, invasive species removal, and checking bluebird houses. Our volunteers host and instruct public programs and special events in partnership with Linn County Conservation.



# COMMUNITY

# Support

Donor	Gift Description	Purpose
City of Center Point	\$12,500	To help pave the Cedar Valley Nature Trail through Center Point
Sharon Foster, Iowa Gourd Society	\$17	For use at Wickiup Hill Learning Center
Dennis Flynn, Janice K Teeter Estate	\$375,000	To be used to benefit Squaw Creek Park
Verlyn & Mary Jackson	\$150	To purchase a Legacy Tree at Morgan Creek Park arboretum
John & Patricia Kerr	\$1,000	Undesignated – Wickiup Hill
City of Center Point	\$12,500	Cedar Valley Trail paving project
Mary Miskimen	\$150	Legacy Tree for Morgan Creek Park arboretum
St Paul's United Methodist Church	\$50	Undesignated for Wickiup Hill
Chad Barnes	\$150	To plant a tree at the Morgan Creek Park arboretum
W. Craig Stephenson	\$15	Undesignated donation
Lily Ponto	\$150	Undesignated for Wickiup Hill
Les Smith	A 48-star US flag	For use and display at Abbe Creek School Museum.
Bloomhall Family Endowed Donor-Advised Fund	\$2,500	For use at the nature playscape at Wickiup Hill
Climate Engineers	\$950	Memorial bench for Matsell Bridge equestrian trail
Linn Area Mountain Bike Association	\$7,080.00	For mountain bike trail expansion - Squaw Creek Park
Janice Hikiji	\$500	Undesignated for Wickiup Hill
Sarah Hermanson	\$150	To plant a memorial tree at Morgan Creek Park arboretum
Frank & Barbara Edmunds	\$100	Undesignated Wickiup Hill education program support
Bruce Bishop	\$150	To plant a memorial tree at Morgan Creek Park arboretum
Carol Petrucka Harshbarger, Hosta Society	\$100	Undesignated for use at Wickiup Hill
Marilyn Andersen	\$10,000	To support the Cedar Valley Nature Trail by purchasing bike racks, a kiosk for the Center Point depot and an area map of Center Point businesses
Rita Stewig	\$150	To plant a memorial tree at Squaw Creek Park
Orlan Love	\$140	For use with bond funds
Laverne & Audrey Busse Foundation	\$414	Wickiup Hill
Iowa Gourd Society	\$200	For use at Wickiup Hill Learning Center
Carolyn Cleveland	\$35	For use at Wickiup Hill
Marjorie Henderson	\$5,000	For use at the playscape project at Wickiup Hill.
Gary Rolling, Hawkeye Bicycle Association	\$2,000	To purchase two benches to be placed along the Cedar Valley Trail
Linn County Pheasants Forever - Chapter 45	\$3,000 in vouchers to purchase prairie seed.	To purchase prairie seed for habitat improvement plantings
Kyle Robinson, Whitetails Unlimited	\$10,073.15	For habitat development at the new acquisition property at Squaw Creek Park
Angela Jordan, ITC Midwest	\$5,000	For use in the nature playscape at Wickiup Hill
Gina Leahy	\$20	For use at Wickiup Hill
Susan Feickert	3 display cases with mounted butterflies and moths	For use in the education program at Wickiup Hill
Duane Arnold Energy Center	\$10,000	Wetland Restoration at Wickiup Hill
Martin Smith, Morgan Creek Cross Country Race	\$467.72	For use at Morgan Creek Park
David & Carol Franklin	\$150	To plant a memorial tree at Morgan Creek Park arboretum
Lawrence & Christine Lynch	\$1,150	Memorial tree and bench for Squaw Creek Park
Dennis Flynn, Janice K. Teeter Estate	\$10,889.14	For use at Squaw Creek Park
Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation	\$451	Anderson Family easement fund
Iowa Master Naturalists	\$200	Wickiup hill education program
Ken McMurray	\$150	To plant a memorial tree at Squaw Creek Park
John Layton	159 assorted potted plants with an estimated value of \$575	For use in the butterfly garden at Morgan Creek Park
Clark McLeod, Monarch Research Project	\$109,749.03	Funding to pay for planting approximately 140 acres of pollinator seed mix on county areas
Erin Frost, Girl Scout Troop 3815	\$75	For use at Wickiup Hill Learning Center
Kenneth & Janice McMurray	\$150 for Memorial Tree	To purchase a Legacy Tree at Pinicon Ridge Park
Loretta Mealy	25 boxes of fishing lures with an estimated value of \$10,000.	For giveaways at public fishing programs
Carol Stucker, Whittier Garden Club	\$55	To support Wickiup Hill Learning Center
Angela Wery	\$700	To place a limestone bench at Matsell bridge Natural Area

# CONSERVATION | Education

Outdoor and environmental education at Wickiup Hill Learning Center is provided for children and adults of all ages. The educational staff offers field trip opportunities for area school groups, preschool organizations, and daycares. Day camps are also provided during the summer months. Staff have attended meetings and workshops to stay informed about the changes that will take place in school curriculums due to new Core Standards in science and social studies. Life-long learning opportunities through public programs are available for adults, nature clubs, and other organizations. FY 2017 highlights include:

- **Conservation Education programs and events:** Conservation Overview Program, EcoFest (partner), Indoor Kayak Classes, Wolf Trip Bus Tour, Science for Squirts, Toddler Toadstools, Wickiup Hill Nature Egg Hunt, Wicked Wickiup Fall Fest, Cub Scout Day Camps (partner), Winter Fishing Academy, Youth Archery, and much more
- **Butterfly and Pollinator Programming:** Monarch Zone Biotent, Beekeeping Series
- **Partners and Collaborators in Linn County Conservation Education:** African American Museum of Iowa, Bee a Part Bee Together, Blank Park Zoo's Plant Grow Fly, Cedar Amateur Astronomers, Cedar Valley Woodcarvers, City of Cedar Rapids, City of Marion, Connections Series, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist, Monarch Zone Project, Linn County Landowner Forum, Prairie State Mushroom Club, Tallgrass Prairie Associates, Trees Forever, Palo Outdoors, Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center, and many others

Type of Program	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS			TOTAL PARTICIPANTS		
	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY15	FY16	FY17
Public	111	122	83	5368	4277	2857
Offsite			68			1911
College	3	2	3	55	38	67
Senior High	9	5	12	252	109	136
Middle School	9	1		623	78	**
Elementary	64	49	92	3849	4098	3868**
Preschool	53	32	30	1322	948	929
Youth Group	34	24	9	1050	642	587
Adult	19	5	78	575	265	2023
Home School	3	2	1	53	35	15
Special Events*	NA	2	22	NA	4350	4230
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>13,113</b>	<b>11,032</b>	<b>13,157</b>



Naturalists at Linn County Conservation offer programs for adults and children, including school field trips throughout the year.

\*Special Events include Eco-Fest and the Kids Day at the Linn County Fair. These numbers were included in the public program numbers in prior years  
 \*\*Middle School and Elementary attendance numbers are combined and listed under Elementary.

## Eastern Iowa Observatory and Learning Center (EIOLC)

in partnership with the Cedar Amateur Astronomers (CAA). Educational events were held at the EIOLC located at Linn County Conservation's Palisades-Dows Preserve promoting public interest and education in astronomy and related sciences. In FY 2017, the Cedar Amateur Astronomers provided 70 events with attendance over 3000 and supported these activities with 745 volunteer hours spent at the observatory.



Wicked Wickiup Fall Fest

# BUDGET

# Expenditures

	ACTUAL FY14	ACTUAL FY15	ACTUAL FY16	ACTUAL FY17
<b>SALARIES &amp; WAGES</b>				
Permanent Staff	\$ 1,781,993.20	\$ 1,846,328.29	\$ 1,939,862.10	\$ 2,068,340.07
Temporary - Seasonal Employees	\$ 152,324.17	\$ 162,822.92	\$ 151,141.49	\$ 164,687.87
Payroll Expenses/Benefits	\$ 711,228.16	\$ 729,967.83	\$ 769,458.57	\$ 853,046.14
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,645,545.53</b>	<b>\$ 2,739,119.04</b>	<b>\$ 2,860,462.16</b>	<b>\$ 3,086,074.08</b>
<b>MAINTENANCE &amp; OPERATIONS</b>				
Administrative Expenses	\$ 78,455.25	\$ 73,137.20	\$ 81,956.51	\$ 81,642.89
Planning	\$ 2,741.21	\$ 2,219.58	\$ 1,739.83	\$ 3,580.65
Conservation Education	\$ 22,327.87	\$ 56,796.30	\$ 60,559.25	\$ 63,344.18
Forestry	\$ 8,192.52	\$ 3,219.94	\$ 7,893.93	\$ 3,555.04
Wildlife Management	\$ 3,492.90	\$ 1,614.92	\$ 2,453.07	\$ 2,479.57
Road Maintenance	\$ 123,348.14	\$ 127,334.13	\$ 166,335.95	\$ 162,329.63
Trail Maintenance	\$ 65,236.46	\$ 23,604.66	\$ 19,180.01	\$ 45,597.15
Water System Maintenance	\$ 10,996.53	\$ 6,076.57	\$ 3,233.51	\$ 3,987.35
Electric System Maintenance	\$ 103,813.90	\$ 109,682.79	\$ 124,718.88	\$ 130,014.91
Sewer System Maintenance	\$ 1,235.22	\$ 1,490.29	\$ 2,669.46	\$ 2,337.56
Building Maintenance	\$ 104,800.77	\$ 118,085.16	\$ 119,025.55	\$ 111,196.50
Park Furniture Maintenance	\$ 34,627.75	\$ 18,998.87	\$ 22,456.12	\$ 11,521.94
Signs	\$ 3,795.17	\$ 16,590.00	\$ 7,627.91	\$ 8,530.04
Fence Maintenance	\$ 6,177.35	\$ 4,752.71	\$ 4,229.80	\$ 1,825.75
Equipment Repair	\$ 82,758.75	\$ 72,045.57	\$ 58,790.77	\$ 89,587.63
Turf Maintenance	\$ 4,880.50	\$ 7,148.37	\$ 7,022.55	\$ 4,239.07
Other Maintenance	\$ 6,112.50	\$ 6,217.37	\$ 9,443.26	\$ 8,556.02
Equipment Operating Expenses	\$ 135,546.39	\$ 118,094.25	\$ 84,429.16	\$ 83,210.23
Property Survey	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 3,410.90	-	\$ 3,500.00
Equipment Purchases	\$ 321,371.25	\$ 74,131.10	\$ 349,003.37	\$ 286,869.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,121,510.43</b>	<b>\$ 844,650.68</b>	<b>\$ 1,132,768.89</b>	<b>\$ 1,107,905.77</b>
<b>TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, MAINTENANCE, OPERATIONS</b>	<b>\$ 3,767,055.96</b>	<b>\$ 3,583,769.72</b>	<b>\$ 3,993,231.05</b>	<b>\$ 4,193,979.85</b>
<b>RESERVE, REAP &amp; OTHER ACCOUNTS</b>				
REAP Land Acquisitions & Projects	\$ 13,660.00	\$ 138,380.50	\$ 46,115.00	\$ 76,504.41
Projects (Conservation Reserve)	\$ 881,692.71	\$ 959,619.99	\$ 1,738,625.77	\$ 2,050,235.72
Land Acquisitions (Conservation Reserve)	\$ -	\$ 155,457.00	\$ 487,677.31	\$ 554,127.39
Gifts & Donations	\$ 18,847.03	\$ 22,183.22	\$ 102,608.07	\$ 325,868.53
Local Options Sales Tax	\$ 254,452.30	\$ 168,158.74	\$ 1,188,418.23	\$ 1,281,128.14
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,168,652.04</b>	<b>\$ 1,443,799.45</b>	<b>\$ 3,563,444.38</b>	<b>\$ 4,287,864.19</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$ 4,935,708.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,027,569.17</b>	<b>\$ 7,556,675.43</b>	<b>\$ 8,481,844.04</b>

# Budget

While the major funding source for the Conservation Board's program is from property taxes, various miscellaneous receipts are collected as supplemental revenue. The following is a summary of these receipts.

	ACTUAL FY14	ACTUAL FY15	ACTUAL FY16	ACTUAL FY17
<b>MISCELLANEOUS RECEIPTS</b>				
Camping	\$ 377,953.00	\$ 490,133.00	\$ 537,652.60	\$ 589,962.00
Lodges & Shelters	\$ 100,504.00	\$ 138,606.00	\$ 102,539.00	\$ 130,495.00
Real Estate	\$ 13,838.19	\$ 8,820.00	\$ 12,927.75	\$ 7,228.56
Concession Operations	\$ 25,724.00	\$ 22,858.96	\$ 28,530.05	\$ 25,932.00
Firewood	\$ 16,792.00	\$ 17,665.78	\$ 19,499.86	\$ 20,150.00
Conservation Education Fees	\$ 12,915.90	\$ 16,637.00	\$ 10,924.00	\$ 16,656.62
Agriculture Sales	\$ 6,055.00	\$ 3,450.00	\$ 4,050.00	\$ 1,000.00
Timber Sales	\$ -	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -	\$ -
Refunds & Reimbursements	\$ 8,975.51	\$ 7,206.64	\$ 7,796.96	\$ 8,454.16
Scrap Iron	\$ 2,925.50	\$ 2,060.62	\$ 1,107.45	\$ 1,821.30
Sale of Merchandise	\$ 33,077.00	\$ 535.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 30.00
Ice sales	\$ -	\$ 924.00	\$ 1,134.00	\$ 989.00
Property Damage Restitutions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37.57	\$ 250.00
Boat Title Fees	\$ 3,735.00	\$ 3,595.00	\$ 3,690.00	\$ 4,005.00
Admin Fee (MCP Credit Cards)	\$ (4,285.17)	\$ (6,130.54)	\$ (5,078.58)	\$ (6,405.30)
<b>SUB TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$ 598,209.93</b>	<b>\$ 707,561.46</b>	<b>\$ 724,865.67</b>	<b>\$ 800,568.34</b>
REAP Funds	\$ 76,880.08	\$ 75,433.48	\$ 75,523.01	\$ 77,909.31
Conservation Reserve	\$ 1,184,451.24	\$ 1,120,189.92	\$ 1,321,346.70	\$ 1,991,309.98
Gifts & Donations	\$ 54,970.65	\$ 41,355.07	\$ 1,549,693.77	\$ 562,237.46
L.O.S.T Funds	\$ 490,905.99	\$ 1,206,006.87	\$ 239,606.37	\$ 1,596,273.14
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,807,207.96</b>	<b>\$ 2,442,985.34</b>	<b>\$ 3,186,169.85</b>	<b>\$ 4,227,729.89</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 2,405,417.89</b>	<b>\$ 3,150,546.80</b>	<b>\$ 3,911,035.52</b>	<b>\$ 5,028,298.23</b>

**Former Board Members  
Linn County Conservation**

- \*John Welter, 1959-64, C.R.
- \*E.J. Petranek, 1959-61, C.R.
- \*J. Harold Ennis, 1959-65, Mt. Vernon
- \*John Wagor, 1959-67, Central City
- \*Rex Conn, 1959, C.R.
- \*John Ashlock, 1960-67, Center Point
- Roland Roupe, 1962, C.R.
- Richard Alexander, 1962-76, Marion
- Lloyd Jones, 1964-68, Center Point
- Kenneth Marsh, 1964-75, C.R.
- Leoral C. Evans, 1965-72, Mt. Vernon
- William Cooper, 1967-74, Central City
- Harry Brookman, 1969-73, Center Point
- Baird A. King, 1973-77, C.R.
- Tom Neenan, 1974-83, Center Point
- Jeanne Andrea, 1975-82, Marion
- David Lyon, 1976-80; 82-86, Mt. Vernon
- Floyd Clark, 1977-79, Marion
- Robert T. Olson, 1978-79; 82-86, C.R.
- Roger A. Dochtermann, 1979-82, C.R.
- Michael Gibney, 1981-82, Palo
- James J. Burke, 1982-88, C.R.
- Willard Ewart, 1984-93, Springville
- Robert A. Beresford, 1986-90, Troy Mills
- Richard A. Fultz, 1986-92, C.R.
- Arlene Blazek, 1987-91, Mt. Vernon
- Carl Means, 1990-94, C.R.
- Arleta Carr, 1991-95, C.R.
- Don Weimer, 1993-97, C.R.
- Dennis Schlicht, 1994-98, Center Point
- James Bailey, 1995-99, C.R.
- Shearon Elderkin, 1998 -2002, C.R.
- Richard Heft, 1999-2003, C.R.
- John Lindstrom, 2000-04, C.R.
- Lynn Millard, 1996-05, Marion
- Karla Gibson, 1992-06, Marion
- John Morris, 2003-07, C.R.
- George Kanz, 2004-08, C.R.
- Ray Dochterman, 2005-09, Marion
- Diane Handler, 2006-10, C.R.
- Cindy Burke, 2007-11, Central City
- Tom Pepper, 2007-12, C.R.
- Lu Barron, 2012-13, C.R.
- Mike Wyrick 2010-14, C.R.
- Kristin Eschweiler 2012-16, Ely
- \*Charter Board Members**

**Department of Conservation  
Linn County, Iowa 2017**

- Dan Biechler, Director
- Dennis Goemaat, Deputy Director
- Randy Burke, Outdoor Recreation Planner
- Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach and Marketing Specialist
- John Layton, Senior Account Clerk
- Mandy Bieber, Clerical Specialist
- Deanna Donovan, Senior Clerk Typist

**Conservation Education at Wickiup Hill Learning Center**

- Jenny Corbett, Lead Conservation Education Specialist
- Gail Barels, Conservation Education Specialist
- Chuck Unga, Conservation Education Specialist
- Sarah Wendt, Conservation Education Specialist

**Services Unit**

- John Scott, Operations Manager
- Tom Oberbreckling, Construction Coordinator
- David Kephart, Carpenter
- Mike Shoop, Heavy Equipment Operator
- Chuck Bogard, Heavy Equipment Operator
- Bill Perrin, Operations Technician
- Tom Blythe, Mechanic

**North Cedar District**

- Shaun Reilly, Resource Manager
- Josh Fossum, Assistant Resource Manager
- Gary Novotny, Resource Technician
- Dawn Zimpfer, Resource Technician
- Jared VanHamme, Resource Technician

**South Cedar District**

- Jason Baumann, Resource Manager
- Joe Reu, Assistant Resource Manager
- Chris Burian, Resource Technician
- Landon Barnes, Resource Technician\*

**Wapsipinicon District**

- Aaron Batchelder, Resource Manager
- Steve Deaver, Assistant Resource Manager
- Josh Volz, Resource Technician
- Nathan Allen, Resource Technician
- Noah Krob, Resource Technician

**Natural Resources Unit**

- Dana Kellogg, Natural Resources Specialist
- Doug Kuehl, Resource Technician
- Tony Nemmers, Resource Technician

*\*position shared with Natural Resources Unit*



The Wickiup Hill learning Center is located just a few miles northwest of Cedar Rapids. Open 7 days a week, the Learning Center provides opportunities to experience the outdoors and develop an awareness and admiration of nature.