

1986-87 IOWA

ACTION PLAN



Department

of

Natural

Resources

INTRODUCTION

In 1965, the United States Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act which established within the Department of Interior an outdoor recreation/resource grant program. This grant program administered by the National Park Service provides matching funds to state and local governments for the purchase of land and development of facilities for outdoor recreation/resource purposes. Each state receives a yearly apportionment of the fund for expenditure by state and local governments. Iowa's yearly apportionment has in recent years been between 1 and 2 million dollars. In Iowa the State Conservation Commission has been named the agency responsible for administering the grant program within the state. Since 1965, Iowa has received over \$41 million in federal cost-sharing for over 1100 state and local recreation development and acquisition projects.

As a prerequisite to receiving its apportionment, each state must undertake certain comprehensive planning activities. Two major components of these on-going planning activities are the preparation of the five-year "State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan" (SCORP) and the "State Action Plan." The SCORP document includes an assessment of the state's outdoor recreation and environmental resources, public needs and demands and current issues as well as a five-year policy plan and program for addressing these needs and issues. The Action Plan represents the State's more detailed plan for addressing the issues and policies developed by the SCORP document. These state planning documents and associated activities must be approved by the federal government and all expenditures of Land and Water Conservation Fund monies must be in compliance with these plans.

Once Iowa's apportionment is received, the available funds are administered to the state, county, and municipal governmental levels by the State Conservation Commission according to established administrative procedures and spelled out in an approved Open Project Selection Process (OPSP). Iowa's procedure allots at least one-half of the grant funds to county and city governments and the remainder to the State Conservation Commission. All projects to be funded are submitted to the Conservation Commission, evaluated in relation to the state and local plans and certain other criteria, and funding approval granted based on this evaluation.

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FROM PLANS TO ACTIONS

The planning and decision-making process is an important task, one which warrants significant amounts of time and effort. By thoughtfully considering

and systematically establishing project priorities (and the mechanism to accomplish each), the Conservation Commission hopes to accomplish several purposes:

1. To achieve intra- and inter-agency knowledge and support of proposed actions;
2. To inform legislator and other Iowa leaders and opinion-shapers on agency objectives and the reasoning behind them;
3. As a result of the first two purposes, the ultimate objective is to best serve the Iowa public through efficient use of funds and manpower to accomplish needed recreational programs, projects, and resource management/protection.

The following sections are very brief synopses of plans, programs, and budget requests aimed at guiding state-level efforts during the next year. Assembling and writing each will not make them happen; nor does printing them in such a manner make them inalterable. Priorities can and will change. They change partly due to changes in services demanded by the public; they change partly in response to unforeseen opportunities too good to pass up, or in response to unforeseen difficulties too great to overcome.

ADDRESSING STATE ISSUES

During the preparation of the 1986 SCORP, the Iowa Conservation Commission undertook a program evaluation within the agency to identify critical issues which would require planning and program emphasis. Twenty issues were identified. These issues are contained within the 1986 SCORP and represent the issue areas being addressed by this 1986-87 "Action Plan."

The following issues and actions represent those identified areas of concern which will be given special resolving action during the 1986-87 fiscal year. It should be emphasized that this action summary deals only with unresolved issues and does not cover those important programs and activities which comprise the Conservation Commission's standard and usual operations. Issues usually exist because there is a need which is not being dealt with by existing program efforts. By emphasizing the issues or areas of concern, proper actions are more likely to be taken to develop responsive programs which will alleviate the issues. Even though the Conservation Commission is the lead recreation/resource agency at the state level, certain state issues may require actions by other state entities or even other levels of government or the private sector.

MANAGEMENT

ISSUE: INTENSIFIED RECREATION/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON EXISTING PUBLIC USE AREAS

Actions needed:

- A. Increased funding for:
 - 1. Watershed protection for stream and lake improvement.
 - 2. Lake/dam renovation and repairs.
 - 3. High quality trail construction and renovation in a manner requiring minimal maintenance under high levels of use.
- B. Analyses of deer population trends on and around state parks, recreation areas and forests, assessment of impacts on natural areas and on agricultural areas, and development of management recommendations to prevent depredation on and near park and recreation areas that would upset vegetative quality.
- C. Assessment of impacts of equestrian and off-road vehicle use on public areas and development of policies and rules to prevent any identified negative impacts.
- D. Implementation of Protected Water Areas (PWA) program on Boone River and initiation of management planning efforts on additional PWA designated rivers.

ISSUE: MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ACCOMMODATING INCOMPATIBLE USES

Actions needed:

- A. Additional land acquisition to allow separation of incompatible uses.
- B. Refined regulation and management of certain uses within areas.
- C. Funding for facility construction designed to minimize conflicts.

ISSUE: RECREATION MANAGEMENT TO PREVENT DEGRADATION OF UNIQUE AREAS

Actions needed:

- A. Management plans for state preserves.
- B. Professionalization of property management staff to include skills in identifying, managing and interpreting unique or unusual natural areas.
- C. Public education so as to recognize acceptable and unacceptable uses of such areas.

ISSUES: DEMAND FOR WINTER SPORTS ON PARKS, FOREST AND STATE RECREATION AREAS

Actions needed:

- A. Assessment of impacts of winter ORV use on natural areas.
- B. Cooperative trail grooming arrangements with clubs and local county conservation boards.
- C. Improved access to lake areas for fishing.
- D. Sledding hills and warming houses.

ISSUE: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC LANDS

Actions needed:

- A. Areas currently closed to hunting (i.e., state parks) should be examined to determine if redesignation as "state recreation areas" is in order. Such redesignation would allow for hunting and would provide a management tool for control of deer herds where called for to reduce resource damage and crop depredation.
- B. Similarly, wildlife areas should be assessed for potential expansion of public use opportunities where such use is compatible with the designated primary purpose.
- C. Wildlife areas should be managed at the maximum level where results are commensurate with efforts expended.
- D. Increased efficiency of management is needed and several possibilities exist:
 1. Contracting with local agencies or individuals.
 2. Cooperative agreements with county conservation boards.
 3. Intersectional transfers within the Commission.
 4. Providing resident management staff on major wildlife areas.

ISSUE: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ON PRIVATE LANDS

Actions needed:

- A. Continued technical assistance to private landowners who possess an interest in wildlife but lack the knowledge to manage their land accordingly.
- B. Cost-sharing in establishment of cropping practices which will be of benefit to the farmer and to wildlife resources as a means of providing demonstration areas, e.g. establishment of warm season grass pastures, shelterbelts, and food plots.
- C. Continuation of incentive programs aimed at reducing property tax liabilities for landowners who retain/manage wildlife habitat on their property.
- D. Expanded participation in programs of other agencies in order to gain maximum wildlife benefits:
 1. State lands--Board of Regents, Department of Social Services, Department of Transportation.
 2. Proper mitigation and enhancement on projects under purview of Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.
 3. Involvement with SCS, ASCS, Iowa State University Extension Service, etc., to incorporate practices beneficial to wildlife resources as well as serving to reduce erosion and improve overall farm management.

ISSUE: ENHANCEMENT OF URBAN HABITATS FOR WILDLIFE ON PUBLIC LANDS.

Actions needed:

- A. Provide landscaping plans, cost estimates, benefits, phase-in steps, and list of contacts for materials and equipment to municipalities requesting assistance in site or land management planning.
- B. Accumulate information on green space planning, values of wildlife, economic considerations, minimum viable areas, landscaping,

maintenance costs, erosion control, pollution control, buffers, watershed filtration, recreation and social implications of having open/wildlife areas. Distribute this information to municipalities by 1990 to assist their zoning ordinance, and development planning and policy-setting processes.

ISSUE: MAINTENANCE OF FAUNAL SPECIES DIVERSITY IN IOWA

Actions needed:

- A. Develop land management techniques to enhance areas for nongame wildlife in urban and rural areas (e.g. designing areas, wildlife plantings and food plots).
- B. Develop and implement additional management techniques to enhance existing nongame wildlife populations (e.g. nesting structures, etc.)
- C. Restoration or reintroduction of endangered or extirpated species by releasing individuals which have been captively reared, rehabilitated, or acquired in trades with other states.
- D. Research to provide information on the status or management of nongame species.
- E. Inventory of urban areas to make land use recommendations to retain natural areas/wildlife during urban development.

ISSUE: LAND MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT FOR FISHERIES

Actions needed:

- A. Aquatic Resource Education Program
- B. Sediment dike -- Little River Lake
- C. Shoreline protection on selected lakes
- D. Handicapped accessible fishing piers.
- E. Fish cleaning stations.
- F. Lake aeration systems.

ISSUE: FISH HATCHERY PRODUCTION AND STOCKING

Actions needed:

- A. Fish holding facility -- Fairport Hatchery.
- B. Water intake improvements -- Rathbun Hatchery
- C. Outside raceways -- Spirit lake Hatchery
- D. De-nitrification system -- Rathbun Hatchery
- E. Fairport Hatchery expansion

ISSUE: DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMS TO PROTECT UNIQUE, THREATENED NATURAL RESOURCES IN IOWA

Actions needed:

- A. Establish acquisition priorities
- B. Develop management plans for existing and new natural areas
- C. Environmental review of construction proposals
- D. Training land managers in unique resources management
- E. Public education/interpretation

LAND ACQUISITION

ISSUE: EXPANDED RESOURCE PROTECTION AREAS TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE DEMANDS

Actions needed:

- A. Increased acquisition of forest lands.
- B. Expansion of existing state parks and recreation areas.
- C. Increased stable funding sources (state and federal) to facilitate planning and implementation.
- D. Intensified efforts to secure less-than-fee-title acquisition on Boone River PWA.

ISSUE: DEMAND FOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN UNIQUE NATURAL SETTINGS

Actions needed:

- A. Site specific management of existing lands with unique natural areas.
- B. Improved public education regarding appropriate recreational uses of high quality natural areas.

ISSUE: SHORTAGE OF PUBLIC FORESTLAND FOR RECREATION

Actions needed:

- A. Increased funding for forest acquisition.
- B. Greater incentives for private forestland protection and planting and allowing public use.

ISSUE: PUBLIC ACCESS TO IOWA'S RIVERS AND STREAMS

Actions needed:

- A. Formalized planning program for water access goals and objectives, including a needs assessment.
- B. Improved public awareness of water access opportunities.
- C. Cooperative endeavors with the Iowa Department of Transportation and with county road departments to incorporate water access projects in road and bridge projects.
- D. Improved watershed protection to improve stream quality.
- E. Acquisition, development, and maintenance of fisherman access sites.
- F. Boat harbor renovation -- Guttenberg, Iowa.
- G. Handicapped accessible fishing piers.
- H. Fish cleaning stations.
- I. Additional fishing jetties.
- J. Fish riffle construction in several Iowa rivers.

ISSUE: LAND ACQUISITION FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT.

Actions needed:

- A. Tracts purchased to solve specific management problems
- B. Acquisition of not only contiguous areas, but also entirely new areas.

ISSUE: ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NONGAME WILDLIFE HABITAT

Actions needed:

- A. Acquire lands which contain important habitat for rare or unique nongame species; or lands with rich viewing opportunities for public contact with nongame species.
- B. Provide observation platforms, trails, signs, etc., at key locations to enhance the opportunity for people to view and learn about wildlife.
- C. Implement a small grants program to assist research, management and public education efforts.

ISSUE: TROUT STREAM ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT

Actions needed:

- A. Continuance of trout stream acquisition program to reach goal of 5% of Iowa's coldwater streams in public ownership.

PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND RESEARCH

ISSUE: BETTER DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERS IN IOWA

Actions needed:

- A. Improved public access to lakes, rivers and streams.
- B. Increased funding/staffing for State Protected Waters Area Program.
- C. Increased funding for forest and fish and wildlife area acquisition.
- D. Expanded Dingell-Johnson program aimed at construction of four new lakes in areas of high need.

ISSUE: DECISIONS ON CONTINUED MANAGEMENT OF MARGINAL RECREATIONAL AREAS

Actions needed:

- A. Re-evaluation of park values on marginal areas with conversion to state forests, state recreation areas or fish and wildlife areas as appropriate.

ISSUE: WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Actions needed:

- A. Continued collection of population data on wildlife species is required by law and provides the information base from which decisions on management and regulation changes are made.
- B. Continued involvement in crop research, including different cultural methods for existing crops, introduction of different types of crops and new utilization practices of existing crops.

ISSUE: MUNICIPAL URBAN WILDLIFE HABITAT INVENTORY

Actions needed:

- A. Inventory wildlife and habitats in Iowa's 10 major cities. Note key natural resources areas and potential market values.
- B. Provide resource information to municipalities and developers to assist planning and reduce construction impacts.
- C. Initiate state and local ordinances and site analysis inventory requirements that help protect natural resources in urban settings.

ISSUE: FISHERY RESEARCH

Actions needed:

- A. Update angler survey for Iowa.

ISSUE: IDENTIFICATION OF UNIQUE, THREATENED NATURAL RESOURCES IN IOWA

Actions needed:

- A. Field surveys
- B. Herbarium and zoological collection surveys.

ISSUES: IOWA STATEWIDE TRAILS PLAN

Actions needed:

- A. Compile a statewide inventory of existing trails by type;
- B. Identify the type and amount of use on existing trails from information sources currently available;
- C. Analyze trail programs in other states and investigate their applicability in Iowa;
- D. Address trail issues, including but not limited to legal, policy, enforcement, maintenance, resource management, public support, and adjacent landowner reactions;
- E. Describe relationships between trails and tourism/economic development including an investment analysis of trail development;
- F. Identify development opportunities and priorities for new trails and improvements to existing trails;
- G. Review state and federal policies and laws pertaining to trails and recommend, if necessary, policy changes and/or legislation;
- H. Provide guidelines for the planning, development, maintenance, and promotion roles of federal, state, county, municipal, and private entities;
- I. Determine administrative (staff and funds) requirements for a statewide trails program; and
- J. Establish a public participation process to receive input on the development of Iowa's trails program.

MAINTENANCE

ISSUE: EXPANDING AND MAINTAINING FACILITIES TO MEET EXISTING DEMANDS

Actions needed:

- A. Expanded lottery funding.
- B. Increased General Fund support.
- C. Continued Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

ISSUE: INCREASING DEMANDS FOR INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS ON PARK AND RECREATION AREAS

Actions needed:

- A. Improved training of area managers in interpretation.
- B. Additional funding for personnel and facilities.

ISSUE: ENCOURAGEMENT OF NONCONSUMPTIVE USES OF WILDLIFE

Actions needed:

- A. Preparing informative brochures, educational packets and articles that will answer questions frequently asked by the public and provide ready-made sources of information for public distribution.
- B. Making contacts with the news media to provide information on nonconsumptive uses of wildlife and the nongame programs.
- C. Educational programs, special events, workshops and talks to educators, youth group leaders, county conservation boards, city managers, conservation organizations, and the general public.
- D. Providing demonstration areas to publicly display wildlife plantings, bird feeding, nest boxes, and other techniques that the public can employ to enhance areas for wildlife.
- E. Promoting an accelerated advertising program to solicit more contributions to the income tax checkoff.

ISSUE: INCREASED CONSERVATION EDUCATION EFFORTS IN URBAN WILDLIFE

Actions needed:

- A. Publications to provide information to various audiences.
- B. Slide/tape shows to provide readily available programs for groups with a minimum of personnel time expenditure.
- C. Special Days Events to provide opportunities for public participation and media coverage of the nongame program.
- D. Talks/slide shows on related subjects to a variety of audiences.
- E. Workshops such as landscaping, planting demonstrations, and additional "how to's" to give groups the technical advice they need to establish programs to help wildlife.

FUNDING

ISSUE: FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR MEETING PROGRAM NEEDS FOR PARKS, RECREATION AREAS, AND FORESTS

Actions needed:

- A. Increased General Fund support for operational needs.
- B. Streamlining of organization and improved efficiency.
- C. Increased lottery funding.
- D. Continued Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- E. New sources of revenue.

LEGISLATIVE

ISSUE: LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE ON RECREATION, TOURISM AND LEISURE

Actions needed:

- A. Legislative recommendations:
 1. A bill to authorize and provide funding for the Iowa Conservation Commission to acquire abandoned railroad rights-of-way for the purpose of conversion to multipurpose trails. Recommended funding level of \$500,000 annually, with a statewide trails plan to be funded out of the first year's appropriation.
 2. A bill to appropriate funds to acquire critical portions of the Blood Run National Historic Landmark Site and to fund additional site planning and archaeological investigations.
 3. A bill to establish an Iowa Tourism Marketing Account, funded initially by \$1.5 million in public funds; but starting July 1, 1987 having public funds matched by private funds. To be used in advertising/promoting Iowa recreation/tourism opportunities.
 4. A bill to create a recreation-tourism-leisure lands fund, utilizing revenue from the Iowa lottery and from an increase in the Iowa real estate transfer tax.
 5. A bill to establish an Iowa Conservation Corps to provide meaningful and productive public service jobs for the young, the unemployed, the handicapped, and the elderly in the areas of park maintenance and restoration, soil conservation, wildlife and land management, energy savings, community improvement projects, tourism, economic development, and other work benefiting human service programs.
 6. A bill to provide for the confidentiality of public records regarding the nature and location of archaeological sites or resources.
- B. Marketing and Information Delivery
 1. Information Delivery System Plan
Basic Purpose: Prepare a "family" of high quality, coordinated communication and information delivery techniques and products including but not limited to a statewide guide to all major attractions, specific information pieces, highway signage alternatives and near-state-of-the-art electronic communications.

2. Interstate Marketing Coordination
Basic Purpose: Establish Midwest marketing packages with willing out-of-state counterparts to the Development Commission's Tourism Section.
 3. Statewide Marketing Plan
Basic Purpose: Using the Davidson/Peterson work as a foundation, develop specific techniques for the state and the public sectors to target market Iowa and its varied attractions. Plan should determine guidelines for public and private funding levels.
 4. Local and Regional Marketing Plans
Basic Purpose: Identify techniques and procedures for localities and regions to use for more effective promotion of attractions of "local" and "regional" significance.
- C. RTL Growth Center Development
1. Welcome and Service Center Plan
Basic Purpose: Determine the feasibility and desirability of developing major new Welcome and Service Centers with private sector involvement on interstate and major highways in Iowa.
 2. Statewide Trails Plan
Basic Purpose: Develop a long range plan for public and private acquisition, development and management of "lineal forms" of recreation such as bicycling, hiking, canoeing, and driving for sightseeing.
 3. Resort Feasibility Study
Basic Purpose: Determine the need and feasibility of improving Iowa's existing resorts as well as developing one or several new private resorts. Determine proper role for state funding and operations of resorts.
 4. Regional "Conservation and Environmental Education Centers" and "Cultural Centers" Plan
Basic Purpose: Provide coordination, feasibility analysis and a statewide plan for the creation of number of regional conservation and cultural centers.
- D. Open Space Expansion and Management
1. Statewide Open Space and Public Recreation Opportunity Plan
Basic Purpose: Using the foundation provided by the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), develop a detailed and comprehensive timetable for public property acquisition, development, rehabilitation and management.
- E. Natural Resource Preservation
1. Statewide Natural Resources Plan
Basic Purpose: Develop a long-range plan, incentives and regulations for the protection, conservation and use of the state's natural resources under public and private ownership.
- F. History and Culture Revitalization
1. Statewide Archaeological and Historical Resources Plan
Basic Purpose: Set long-term priorities, procedures and incentives for protecting and interpreting the state's many historical and archaeological resources.

FUTURE ACTIONS

This 1986-87 State Action Plan has dealt primarily with those actions which are now underway to resolve previously identified issue areas. As has been described previously in this document, Iowa is committed to a planning process which strives to involve public input, open communication and governmental coordination in issue evaluation and decision-making. As Iowa's planning processes proceed, the action plan will play a vital role in communicating the state's recreation/conservation issues and resolving actions. The benefits of the action plan are not only in the actions it documents, but also the effect it has in helping to shape future actions.

The reader of this document is encouraged to contact the Iowa Conservation Commission with any comments, concerns, or reactions to this State Action Plan. Issues which have not been identified or actions which may be inappropriate can only be known to the state through the reaction and comment of concerned Iowans.

Comments can be submitted to:

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