



THE LAND USE BULLETIN

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Iowa Parks and Trails Need Our Protection

Guest Column by Mark S. Edwards

Does this path have a heart? This is a question an old man asks. If it does, it makes for a joyful journey. If not, it is of no use. I have been to almost every state park in Iowa in addition to the state forests, recreation areas, and preserves. I found my heart, a career and a beautiful world walking there.

Trails are how we find ourselves in the great outdoors. Even if you drive through these areas without stopping you are on a hard surfaced trail providing protection and access to the area. When you step from the car for whatever reason you need a trail, whether on concrete to go to the bathroom or a dirt path to explore for days.

There is a history to each of these trails and peculiar places. The people who came before us made choices of the heart and left us a direction to follow and learn from. The one thing all our public trails have in common is providing a path to places being protected and allowed to heal. This is extremely rare in Iowa.

Iowa started our state park system around the early 1900's because there was so little left undisturbed. Even before we could designate these areas as parks they had been clear-cut, mined, plowed and heavily grazed. Iowa struggled through the 1930's Great Depression, along with dust bowl days, unimaginable droughts and economic collapse to expand a state park system for all Iowans.

By 1937, Iowa led the nation in the establishment of state parks. Today, we compete with one other state for the very bottom in state parks and public lands. We are the most biologically changed place in North America. Roughly 98% of Iowa's 36 million acres

have been altered for agricultural use, cities, and roads.

"Iowa, the 19th-largest state with 36 million acres, is now known as the most biologically altered state in North America."

There are no old growth forests left to study or enjoy. We drained 98% of our wetlands, cut 80% of the trees, and plowed up 99.9% of our prairies. We have some of the most polluted surface water, the least species diversity and are at the bottom in environmental spending in the nation. This makes these parks very, very special not only for people but for the remaining critters.

With only 3 percent of Iowa currently covered by woodlands we are fooled by all the green. According to a recent report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's forest service, wooded space has dropped
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1000 Friends of Iowa is a statewide non-profit organization founded in 1998 based in Des Moines, Iowa.

1000 Friends of Iowa promotes responsible development that

- Conserves and protects our agricultural and natural resources
- Revitalizes our neighborhoods, towns and cities, and
- Improves the quality of life for future generations

3850 Merle Hay Road
Suite 605
Des Moines, IA 50310
Phone 515-288-5364
Fax 515-288-6362
kfoi@1000friendsofiowa.org
www.1000friendsofiowa.org

How Sprawl Affects Water Supply

A New Report from American Rivers

American Rivers, an organization working to protect and restore the nation's rivers and streams since 1973, recently published a report explaining effects of urban sprawl on water supply and what can be done. The report includes:

How Sprawl Affects Water Supply

- **Loss of Natural Areas**—Loss of wetlands, forests and meadows has many negative impacts, among them, the loss of the enormous water storage capacity of natural areas.
- **Impervious Surfaces**—Sprawling low-density development is a leading cause of imperviousness, with automobile-related surfaces such as roads and parking lots accounting for 50 to 66% of the total impervious surface in cities!
- **Turf Grass**—Sprawl means more than roads and parking lots, it also means larger and larger lots planted with turf grass -- which are often nearly as impervious as concrete and asphalt.
- **Stormwater Infrastructure**—This infrastructure channels rainfall and snowmelt into storm drains and pipes, and dumps it into receiving waters, often far from its place of origin. The consequences are the loss of groundwater recharge, reduced base flows in streams, increased flooding, and lower water quality.

What Can Be Done

- Promote cluster development to leave large areas of native vegetation and small streams intact.
- Replace lawns with native vegetation, and collect rainwater from roofs to store for irrigation or discharge downspouts into local infiltration fields
- Local governments can limit impervious surfaces
- Local government can reconfigure traditional stormwater infrastructure to increase infiltration.

Read the full report at <http://www.americanrivers.org/initiatives/water-supply/sprawl/>.

Further Reading about Iowa's trails, parks and natural resources:

<http://www.americanrivers.org/region/midwest/>

<http://www.americanrivers.org/assets/pdfs/reports-and-publications/PavingOurWayToWaterShortages4ae6.pdf>

<http://www.iowaswaterandlandlegacy.org/home.aspx>

<http://www.iaenvironment.org/>

<http://www.inhf.org/>

continued from page 1 by roughly 40,000 acres largely because of increased agricultural and urban land use. Farmers converted around 50,000 acres of grassland, scrubland and wetlands from 2008 to 2011.

Urban sprawl in Iowa alone has increased 50,000 acres in the last ten years. And yet today, all of our 87 postage stamp sized state parks total only 55,871 acres or a square just over nine miles on a side, the equivalent of a short day's walk.

The city of Des Moines covers 71,000 acres or a square about ten and half miles on a side. Most of these parks can be walked across in about an hour and you are never farther than a mile from a road. State parks are knotted with over 500 miles of trails or more than half the amount of roads (941 miles) in Des Moines. We are not able to take care of the trails in our parks now as many are neglected and eroding badly with some reaching depths of six feet or more.

Annual visits to Iowa's state parks climbed from 11.4 million in 1994 to 15.6 million last year. Increasing demand to use these last, small "undeveloped" state parks will insure more "development" and decrease biological diversity. A significant proportion of these state parks have been used for logging; developing hundreds of miles of roads; 752 parking lots; 71 campgrounds; over 500 miles of trails; 24 artificial lakes; and many more square miles of toilets, showers, offices, houses, nature centers, sewage lagoons, shelters, lodges, beaches, golf courses and a resort.

These parks contain thousands of acres of lawn composed of non-native species to mow and maintain. Invasive plants are expanding and displacing the original ones in almost every park. I would say easily a quarter of our total state park acres are covered in non-native vegetation.

Even if we combine all public land, including federal, state, and county conservation areas in Iowa and made them available as a biological repository they would total less than two percent of Iowa and form a square less than 32 miles on a side. Only 10% of Iowa's remaining prairies and forests lie within the public domain. I could continue with more statistics but they are sad.

Please listen closely - every existing park is too small and separated to maintain biological diversity and

each continue to lose species. How do we keep what so many have worked so hard to protect? Surprisingly the greatest support for parks comes from people who never go to them. They just know they are important. Parks illustrate our maturity and understanding of where we live. They are part of our community, history, and just plain Iowa beauty. They are one of the few places you can take your children and get a sense of what a natural, healing landscape is like.

Public meetings were held this year across Iowa to determine what needed to be done to our state parks. The overwhelming outcome was a long list of developments and desires such as more mowing, more trails, more and bigger campsites, bathrooms, and playgrounds. The best answer offered to provide for these "improvements" was to plant corn in the parks. Then we could sell the corn and hire people to mow the non-native grass.

State parks were set aside to improve water quality in our lakes and streams, preserve places of scientific importance and quiet beauty. They were to act as living historical monuments and outdoor classrooms. They were to maintain our dwindling natural resources while providing recreation and appreciation. More importantly, these parks symbolized our maturity as a state which recognized the importance of placing limits on development for present and future generations.

Parks were meant to allow nature to heal and preserve the land. We need to stop all development within these core areas now. We need to provide additional land to buffer all that remains. And, most importantly, we need to create corridors or real trails, some miles wide, to link these core areas together so the flow of all life and re-creation can continue.

Which path now? The head, the heart, the one sees one above the other. What kind of world do you want to live in? If the parks' future depends on the few who vote, it will be decided by politicians and pessimism - not posterity. But, what if everyone and every being voted? I think the trees, flowers, bugs and birds would win and vote everyone out of office - and out of the parks.

Mr. Edwards, of Boone, recently retired as trails coordinator after a 30-year career with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

2012-2013 ACTIVITY REPORT

Issue Focus/Citizen Empowerment: 1000 Friends continues educating and advising local citizens on land use issues in their communities and the best way to advocate for responsible land use throughout Iowa. We also continue to promote alternative transportation options and greater citizen input into transportation planning.

Carlisle mayor and Iowa Smart Planning Task Force Co-chair, Ruth Randleman, was nominated by 1000 Friends of Iowa to be on Smart Growth America's national Local Leaders Smart Growth Steering Committee. Ruth was selected and agreed to serve on the committee of 22 from across the nation. Ruth has been very beneficial supporting smart growth at the Iowa Legislature this past session opposing a bill to eliminate Iowa Smart Growth Principles.

Farma-Save Signs: One of our most popular programs statewide, our Farma-Save signs are a creative and catchy way to get people thinking about one or more aspects of land use. Designed after the Burma Shave signs of the 1960s, they are working hard in a permanent home near Earlham on I-80. We currently have six sets on hand for placement around the state. One available set, pictured here, promotes alternative transportation such as bicycling.

Contact crystal_letto@yahoo.com or call 515-288-5364 for more information.

Speakers Bureau: A historic preservation presentation, developed and presented by Steve Wilke-Shapiro, can be requested individually as a topic for a keynote at a meeting, or as a series for a one day workshop. The presentations deal with the importance of historic preservation in older neighborhoods, illustrated by examples of how communities can use preservation as a tool for organizing and community development. One of the goals is to promote historic tax credits to smaller cities or groups who may not understand how to maximize benefits of the programs available.

The topics Mr. Wilke-Shapiro has developed presentations for are:

- Why Old Buildings Matter
- Historic Tax Credit Basics (one directed at homeowners, one directed at business/developers)
- Lead Paint in Older Homes
- Working With Contractors
- Working with Design Professionals

Designed to appeal to a broad audience including experienced preservationists and newcomers to the concept of historic preservation, we are excited about the potential for this series to reach many across the state.

Outreach: 1000 Friends takes advantage of monthly news stories in print and radio through the Iowa News Service. We also had display tables and booths at conventions and meetings throughout the state. We continue to make effective use of our website, email and printed material to keep our members informed of local and federal land use issues needing our attention and input, as well as promote Smart Growth America Studies via our Public Policy Updates, Action Alerts, Website and Facebook updates and our printed quarterly Land Use Bulletin.

Best Development Awards: Our Best Development Awards program continues to successfully highlight outstanding projects which employ Smart Growth Principles and illustrate Sustainable Development practices. We are currently accepting nominations for the 2013 Best Development Awards. We encourage you to nominate local projects in your community you feel deserve recognition!



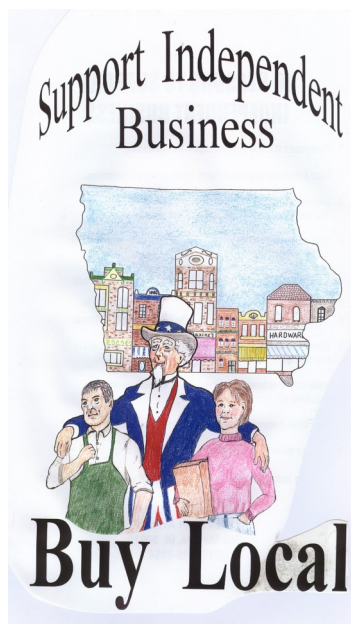
2012-2013 ACTIVITY REPORT

Buy Local Program: 1000 Friends of Iowa Buy Local Posters continue to be distributed to shops in small towns and neighborhood stores. The interest in supporting local businesses and buying locally continues to grow. While the impact of our specific Buy Local poster is unknown, the Buy Local movement continues to gain momentum and strength.

Email crystal_letto@yahoo.com or call 515-288-5364 to request Buy Local posters.

Transitions: Erv Klaas retired from his 1000 Friends board position after ten years of serving on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. "Enough for all forever" is Erv's pet description for sustainability. May we all strive to continue in the example he has set for us with equal passion.

Stacey Long joined the Board of Directors and brings with her passion, knowledge and new energy. Stacey has already begun work to make our website more user friendly and the content more defined. She also plans to send out a survey asking for the opinions and input of members to help 1000 Friends of Iowa better connect with members and the general public.



Financial Report

As of December 31, 2012

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings	
1000 • MetaBank	<u>\$44,219.29</u>
Total Checking/Savings	<u>\$44,219.29</u>

Other Current Assets

1200 • Undeposited Funds	<u>\$ 1,820.00</u>
Total Other Current Assets	<u>\$ 1,820.00</u>

Total Current Assets	<u>\$46,039.29</u>
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TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$46,039.29</u>
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LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities

2400 • Payroll Liabilities	<u>\$ 233.02</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$ 233.02</u>

Total Liabilities	<u>\$ 233.02</u>
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Equity

3000 • Opening Bal Equity	<u>\$36,015.68</u>
3200 • Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>\$ -5,679.57</u>
Net Income	<u>\$15,470.16</u>
Total Equity	<u>\$45,806.27</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>\$46,039.29</u>
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WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At the 2013 Annual Meeting, members present elected Donna Taylor of Des Moines to 1000 Friends of Iowa's Board of Directors, and John Morrissey rejoined our board of directors! Please join us in welcoming Donna and welcoming John back!

Visit www.1000friendsofiowa.org to learn more about the volunteers serving on 1000 Friends of Iowa's Board of Directors.

New Report Demonstrates Success of Main Street Program

A newly released report, "Getting Results: The Economic Impact of Main Street Iowa, 1986-2012" includes 26 years of data demonstrating how the Main Street Iowa program has successfully helped Iowa Communities restore and realize the economic potential of their historic areas. According to the report, prepared for Main Street Iowa and the Iowa Economic Development Authority by PlaceEconomics of Washington, D.C., since the Main Street Iowa Program began:

- 11,500 new jobs have been created in Main Street Districts.
- More than 3,800 businesses have been established, relocated to, or expanded.
- \$1.1 billion have been invested in Main Street buildings, including \$300 million in acquisition and over \$800 million in building renovation.
- Projects in Main Street districts have generated an average of 623 Iowa jobs and over \$19 million in paychecks every year since the program began.
- In spite of a recession and a shaky economy, Main Street rehabilitation projects in the last 10 years have created on average more than 1,000 jobs each year, and generated worker earnings of nearly \$35 million.
- Local governments gain \$10.8 million in property tax revenue every year from the rehabilitation investment alone in Main Street districts.
- Conservatively, the net new businesses and business expansions in Main Street districts generated state sales tax revenues of \$43 million in 2012.
- For every \$1 spent on the state program, nearly \$72 in private investment has been spent on the acquisition and rehabilitation of buildings in Main Street districts.

The full report is full of encouraging details about how the Main Street Iowa program has worked. The report is available for download at <http://iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/userdocs/documents/ieda/MainStreetReportMay2013.pdf>.

Communities interested in revitalizing their historic main streets are encouraged to apply for the Main Street Program. Learn more at www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/IDRC/MainStreetIowa.

Two Books by Local Authors Discuss Important Issues

"America's Two-Headed Pig"

by Leah Dunham and Dr. Arthur Dunham

Dr. Arthur Dunham, a large animal veterinarian from Northeastern Iowa, has spent years studying research papers and farm publications in attempts to remedy the underlying causes of unusual animal ailments. Dr. Dunham shared what he's learned with attendees of our 2013 Annual Meeting.

In 2008 his daughter, Leah Dunham, decided to turn her father's research notes and observations into a book, released June 25, 2013. In the book, "America's Two-Headed Pig", she explains how veterinary diagnoses have been complicated by genetically modified, antibiotic resistant, and pesticide dependent ag systems. She argues that simple changes to farm policies and human consumption patterns could make huge differences to the future health of all creatures, great and small.

Visit <http://americastwoheadedpig.com/> to learn more about the book, the authors and to purchase your copy.

"America's Climate Century"

by Senator Robb Hogg

In his new book, "America's Climate Century: What climate change means for America in the 21st Century and what Americans can do about it", Senator Robb Hogg calls on Americans to make the fight against climate change our new national purpose. With a fresh, personal, accessible and straight-talking approach, the book explains why the 21st Century is America's climate century and what you can do to help.

Senator Hogg attended the 2013 Annual Meeting and generously donated all proceeds from book sales during the meeting to 1000 Friends of Iowa. The book, just published this spring, is available at many local bookstores as well as online.

NEWS from Around the State

Dubuque County Supervisors Pass Zoning Proposal to Conserve Farmland

On July 15th, Dubuque County Supervisors passed a new “Agricultural Residential” designation with the intention of conserving farmland. According to Anna O’Shea, Dubuque County Zoning Administrator, the new amendment is the first step “to change the Zoning Ordinance to address the Ag Exemption as directed by Iowa Code, which states all agricultural uses are exempt from Zoning Ordinance requirements.”

Previous ag zoning required five acres to be platted off from an existing farm if rezoning was requested. If landowners sold their farm but wanted to remain in their farm home, they were required to split off five acres around the existing home. If they wanted to add another home to the farm, zoning forced them to make a five acre parcel to accommodate it. The new zoning ordinance will allow landowners to create a minimum lot size of one acre, using less farmland.

The new ordinance will restrict landowners to re-zone one acre lots to clearly defined uses. Landowners who have property already zoned Agriculture will be allowed to build an additional single-family home if the residence “promotes farming operations in the area”; separates existing farm houses from surrounding farmland if there is a need to do so; or build what Dubuque County terms a “summer cottage”.

Supervisors agreed the ordinance wasn’t going to be perfect, but all three thought it would help eliminate spot-zoning and was a step in the right direction. No cap was placed on the amount of times a farm could be approved to subdivide.

The next step will be redefining a farm and changing the Agricultural Exemption Form so the Zoning Office will have more information from someone claiming they are exempt from the Zoning Codes. The final step will be updating the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the goals and objectives in the Dubuque County Regional Smart Plan adopted by the County in January 2013. The process is tentatively scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2014.

Visit www.dubuquesmartplan.org to read more.

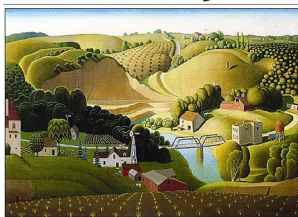
Seeking Applicants to Board of Directors

1000 Friends of Iowa is looking for talented people to join our Board of Directors. We are hoping to elect several new members to serve a three-year term beginning with the elections held at our 2013 Annual Meeting. All applicants and nominees are considered, and we welcome your application. Read through the Board Member Responsibilities listed below and if you, or someone you know, would like to apply visit

<http://www.1000friendsofiowa.org/content/blogcategory/84/168/>
to download the Board of Directors Application Packet.

Complete and return the Board of Directors Application Packet by email to:
crystal_letto@yahoo.com. or mail the completed packet to:

1000 Friends of Iowa
c/o Crystal Leto
3850 Merle Hay Road, Suite 605
Des Moines, IA 50310-1300



Stone City, Iowa 1930

Grant Wood, 1891-1942

Citizens United for Responsible Land Use

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage

PAID

Des Moines, IA
Permit No. 4996

3850 Merle Hay Road, Suite 605
Des Moines, IA 50310-1600

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

2013 Best Development Awards

Nominate a Project In Your Area!

Deadline to submit: August 30, 2013

Nominations for the 2013 Best Development Awards are being accepted through August 30, 2013. 1000 Friends of Iowa established the annual Best Development Awards in 2001. The awards showcase development projects and programs in Iowa that best reflect the principles of smart growth and sustainability. They also recognize the efforts of businesses, developers, cities, organizations, and individuals responsible for these projects. The winners of Best Development Awards are models of how responsible development practices provide benefits to the community, the environment, and quality of life for future generations.

Awards are given in the following seven categories:

- New Residential
- Renovated Residential
- Renovated Commercial/Civic
- New Commercial/Civic
- Mixed Use
- Leadership
- Storm Water Management

If there is a project in your community you believe deserves recognition, please visit our website, www.1000friendsofiowa.org, to learn more about the simple nomination process!