



# Buchanan County Conservation Board

**Annual Report**  
(July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

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*“Improving quality of life  
through programs of  
conservation and  
education.”*

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**Your Conservation Board, FY20:** Conservation Board members are county residents who have an expressed interest in conservation. They are appointed by the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors to staggered five-year terms. For more information about the roles of a Conservation Board member, contact the Executive Director (see below).



*Loren Hamilton, Chair  
Independence, IA*



*Ronnie Wolfe, Vice-Chair  
Quasqueton, IA*



*Karen Stephenson, Secretary  
Independence, IA*



*Andy Crump  
Independence, IA*



*Anita Miller  
Independence, IA*



*Mary Jean Blaisdell  
Independence, IA*



*Dan Cohen, Executive Director  
Fontana Park, Hazleton, IA*

*For more information about programs and activities of the Conservation Board, contact the Executive Director, Dan Cohen.*

*Fontana Park  
1883 125th St.  
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*Visit Buchanan County Conservation Board at  
[www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com)!*

*Like "Fontana Park" on Facebook!*

# Buchanan County Conservation Board

## FY20 Annual Report

*“Increasing quality of life through programs of conservation and education.”*

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### Executive Summary



#### **Buchanan County Conservation Board Members** July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

**Loren Hamilton, Chair**  
Independence, IA

**Ronnie Wolfe, Vice Chair**  
Quasqueton, IA

**Anita Miller, Secretary**  
Independence, IA

**Andy Crump**  
Independence, IA

**Karen Stephenson**  
Independence, IA  
(through 12/31/19)

**Mary Jean Blaisdell**  
Independence, IA  
(beginning 1/1/20)

#### **Buchanan County Conservation Board**

**Send correspondence to:**  
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Progress in the parks was big and swift as the year began last summer. With funding fully secured, work began in earnest on major upgrades and new improvements to the Iron Bridge Access - a premier gateway to river use on the Wapsipinicon River between Independence and Quasqueton. The Conservation Board realized a long-term goal as it added 16 more acres to the northeast end of Fontana Park. This represented a key step in the Conservation Board's future ability to provide significant, new opportunities for facility use in the County's most popular park. Intense planning was underway to solidify a vision for future public outdoor recreation and education. Then, things changed...

In March, the reality of a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic hit Iowa and the rest of the country. For a short period, nearly everything was shutdown, including private businesses, government agencies, and the ability for people to gather. The Conservation Board took responsible steps in both the shutdown and subsequent reopening. While the Governor's proclamation initially had most workers on leave, the Board and Director took this time to plan (via teleconference) scenarios for managing the public's continued demands for outdoor recreation and gatherings. When state restrictions eased, safety procedures were in place or quickly modified to reopen facilities, with park staff at work. Naturalists offered education programs and promoted outdoor recreation in new ways, adapting to safety requirements during a pandemic.

Through it all, public demand not only continued, it actually increased. During the height of the initial pandemic response, Google Mobility Reports showed a 41% increase on average for Iowans traveling to parks and recreation areas - all other travel sectors were sharply down. By summer of 2020, this increase had grown to more than 200 percent! Conservation staff continued maintenance of park grounds and management of public use. The escape to nature has been seen repeatedly throughout history during times of crisis and stress. In these times, it is especially apparent that providing public lands, outdoor recreation, and healthy environments is an essential service - to be taken very seriously.

The Board and Staff works everyday to provide educational programs, maintain parks and facilities, and manage natural areas for public health, enjoyment, and community vitality!

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Dan Cohen, Executive Director  
Buchanan County Conservation Board

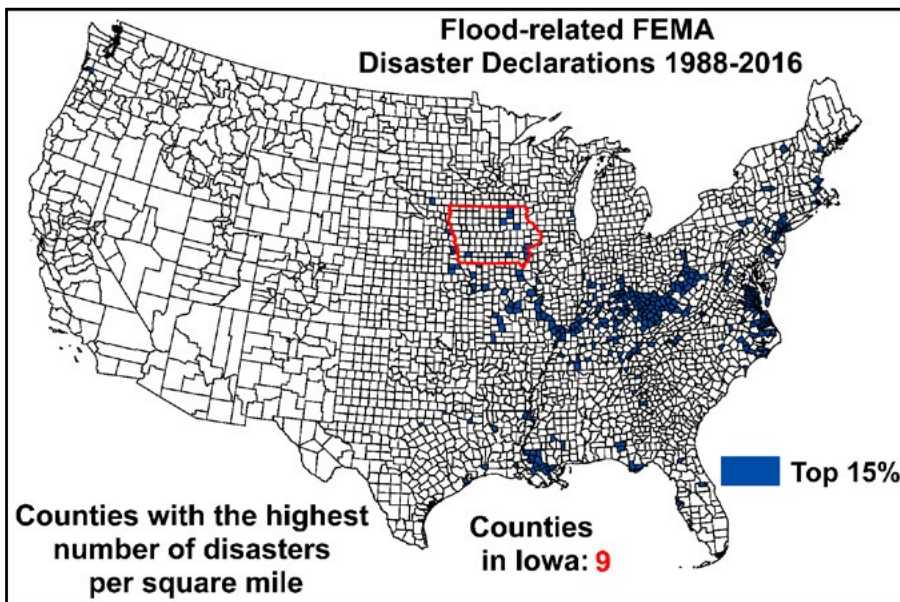
# The Annual Report and Long Term Planning

This Annual Report serves two roles. The report is an explanation of the projects and services provided during the Fiscal Year running from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Such a report is called for in the 1955 legislation which established the County Conservation Board system (Chapter 350 of the Code of Iowa). This report goes a step further, and indicates future objectives of the Conservation Board and its staff. It serves as an annual update of the Outdoor Recreation, Conservation, and Open Spaces Plan. These plans can be viewed online by visiting [www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com).

## Conservation and Natural Resources

From 1990 to 2013, retired CRP and other factors resulted in nearly 3,000 square miles of habitat loss for pheasants and other upland

wildlife. That equates to more than an eight mile wide strip of land stretching from Council Bluffs to Davenport! Land planted to oats, hay, and wheat suffered a 28 percent loss between 2003 and 2011, as much of it was converted to row crops. Not surprisingly, many of Iowa's rivers and lakes are considered impaired by pollutants. Lack of perennial ground cover, loss of historic wetlands and other landscape features that hold water, and a changing climate also have resulted in increased number and severity of floods.



*Buchanan County ranks in the top 15% of counties in the entire nation in the number of flood-related disasters in recent decades.*

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources receives less than one percent of the state's general tax appropriations, routinely ranking among the lowest in per capita spending on conservation, environmental protection, and public lands available to its citizens.

In 2010, Iowans voted overwhelmingly to change the Iowa Constitution to create a Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, and to designate 3/8-cent of the next sales tax increase to fund the Trust. Although there is great public support to raise the sales tax to fund this program (about 70% of Iowans polled want this to happen), the Trust Fund sits empty due to legislative inaction. The Conservation Board, along with the statewide County Conservation System and many other conservation, recreation, business and health-related groups, work to educate the public and legislators about the need for this investment. The Buchanan County Board of Health



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and Environmental Health added their voice with resolutions in favor of funding the Trust. Boards of Supervisors and other county departments have supported the effort through the Iowa State Association of Counties.

### **Private Lands - Landowner Assistance**

Although the Conservation Board manages 41 properties, these public lands account for **less than one percent of the landscape**. To a large degree, the fate of waters, wildlife, land, air, and wise use of natural resources is in the hands of private landowners and land managers, and other citizens. In Iowa, nearly all landowner/farm programs are voluntary. Therefore, conservation and natural resources rely heavily on an educated and motivated citizenry. The Conservation Board promotes a knowledgeable and conservation-minded citizenry through its education programs, and provides planting equipment and services for implementing conservation practices on private land.

During the year, Conservation Board staff and equipment were used to **plant 290 acres of prairie grasses and flowers on 32 parcels of private land**. The Conservation Board's tree planter was used to plant 500 trees. Conservation Staff continues to implement the Prairies to Schools/Prairies to Businesses Program, and advising Schools, Cities, and trails groups on ways to incorporate conservation plantings and energy considerations.

The Conservation Board understands the need to work at the **watershed level**, and the Director attended meetings or consulted with the Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed Management Authority (WMA). The WMAs are cooperative ventures among counties, cities, soil and water conservation districts, and other interested groups to address flood risk and water quality. The Conservation Board Director also worked on past watershed projects for the North and South Forks of the Maquoketa River and Buffalo Creek. The Buffalo Creek Watershed project was found to keep the equivalent of **316 dump truck loads of eroded farm soil** out of the river, and Buffalo Creek was removed from the State's Impaired Waters List.



*Conservation Technician Chris Hansen uses a prairie seed drill on private land.*



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### **Public Lands - Natural Areas**

Natural areas constitute most of the public land managed by the Conservation Board. On these areas, management practices are implemented to enhance wildlife habitat, maintain unique natural features, including healthy forests, prairies, wetlands, and waterways, and improve water quality. For more information about management of individual Conservation Board areas, see pages 17-27.

The Wapsipinicon River Corridor is recognized statewide as one of Iowa's most important areas for wildlife habitat and public recreation, and is a Conservation Board top priority for protection and enhancement. The Iron Bridge Access was transformed to become a major gateway for public use of the river. This included a Universal Launch system that provides a dedicated ramp for loading and loading people, paddle craft, and equipment, and ramps for motorboat launching and an easily assessable launch for canoes and kayaks. The parking lot was paved and enlarged, with parking guidance. A restroom and lighting was added. New paved trails make the ramps, restrooms, and parking easier to access by people with varying physical and paddling abilities. The paved trails also extend to under Nolen Avenue to expanding parking along Guy Grover Timber and Tree Plantings. Visitors can continue walking on the maintained soft paths of the wildlife area.

*Park Ranger Jeremy Whittle plants seedling oak trees using a tree planter at Roberts Wildlife Area.*



Recent improvement to the water control structures at the Koutny Pond wetland allowed staff to accomplish better management by

manipulating the wetland's water levels. After having allowed the wetland to drain, inundate the wetland in August. This management allows aquatic habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. The area's value to wildlife, water quality and flood control received a boost as a new 20-acre wetland complex was added north of Koutny Pond. The new wetland was completed through efforts of the Middle Cedar River Watershed Management Authority and Benton County. Buchanan and Benton County Conservation Board

Directors are working together to provide public access to this area.

More than 2,600 trees were planted by Conservation Staff. Most were planted at Roberts Wildlife Area as per the management plan to develop a savannah. Trees also were planted to enhance an area in Jakway Forest that previously had received a management clearcut. Tree plantings at Jakway and Fontana received some thinning, and a management clearcut was conducted in Jakway Forest. A sunflower food plot was planted at Crumbacher Wildlife Area.

The COVID-19 Pandemic blossomed just as Conservation Staff was readying its burn plans. With social distancing and information



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about susceptibility to impaired lungs, the decision was made to postpone spring burns. Areas were designated for potential late summer or fall burning. Conservation Staff is always trying to catch up on burns as weather/conditions allow. In the absence of burning, staff attempted more mechanical means to remove invading woody vegetation from prairie areas. This, too was impacted by the Pandemic as staff temporarily was placed on leave, and hiring of interns was decreased. Work quickly had to be prioritized away from natural areas management to lawns and park facilities which quickly began to receive lots of visitors.

Invasive species are of special concern throughout Iowa, as they supplant native species and greatly reduce habitat diversity. Some of the more prevalent species in Buchanan County public lands include Reed's canary grass, garlic mustard, crown vetch, multiflora rose, Canada thistle, buckthorn, and woody plants in prairies. The Conservation Department worked hard to eradicate or reduce these species, and to nurture establishment of native plants and wildlife. Pulling, spraying, burning, and mowing were regularly used in problem areas. Some of the bigger invasive species problems are identified for individual Conservation Board areas on pages 17-27.

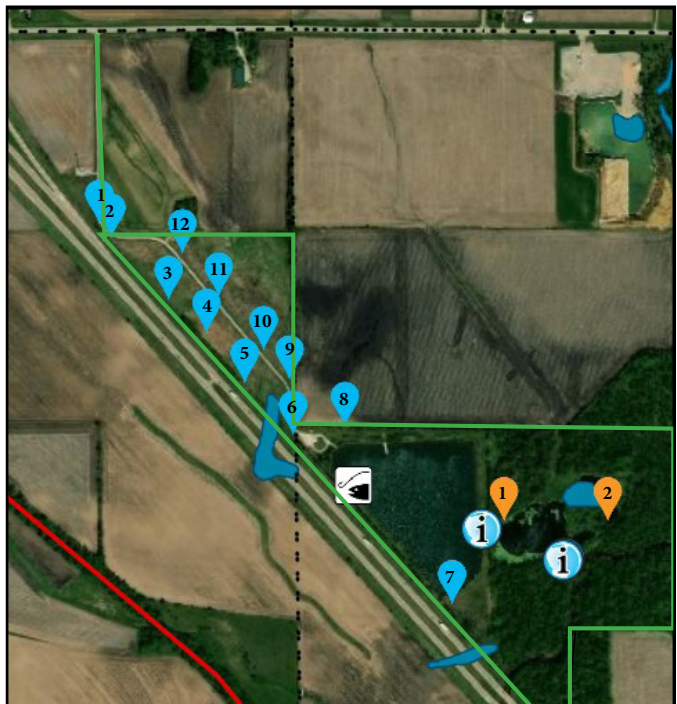
To address needs of nesting bluebirds, wood ducks, and bats, more than 100 nest boxes are maintained and monitored throughout conservation areas. Volunteers conduct most of the bluebird nest monitoring and maintenance. This year, staff made a more intense effort to map nest box locations, replace some boxes, and reposition boxes to make them more likely to attract birds.

Another area of concern and lost staff time was an increase in illegal off-road ATV/UTV use in parks and natural areas, with complaints from the public and citations written.

### **Future Objectives – Private Lands & Public Natural Areas**

- Continue timber stand improvement, with priorities at Jakway and Fontana Parks. Foster regrowth in the 2019 clearcut at Jakway Forest and establishment of the Roberts Wildlife Area 2020 savannah planting.
- Plant an evergreen buffer along the CAFO property at Roberts Wildlife Area.
- Give acquisition priority to areas as per the Conservation Board's policy.
- Monitor fish populations at Koutny Pond, Fontana Park, and Grover Pond.
- Use the new water control structures at Koutny Pond to better managed marsh vegetation.
- Conduct prairie and timber burns as per a burn schedule. Use mechanical removal to rid prairie areas of woody plants.

*Nest boxes (bluebird and wood duck) were repaired, replaced, and sometimes repositioned. Locations mapped using GPS, allowing volunteers and staff to more effectively record nesting data. The illustration below shows nest box locations at Koutny Pond/Hoffman Woods.*



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- Continue to offer the Prairies to Schools/Prairies to Businesses Program.
- Participate in nest box, monarch, frog and toad, bald eagle nesting, osprey, and other wildlife monitoring as part of education and volunteer programs.
- Continue to address invasive species problems, especially the following:
  - Crown vetch at the Hodges and North Wildlife Area;
  - Thistles and woody plants at the Crumbacher Area;
  - Garlic mustard at Jakway Forest, Putty Root, Wehner Woods, and Schneider-Heinick-Rowe;
  - Honeysuckle at Fontana Park and Wehner Woods;
  - Buckthorn at Jakway Forest, Roberts Wildlife Area, Patton Prairie, and Newton Township Area.
  - Water milfoil and brittle naiad at Koutny Pond.
- Maintain a sunflower/wildlife food plot at Crumbacher Wildlife Area.
- Promote and conduct conservation plantings on private lands through equipment and staff planting services.
- Provide technical assistance to Watershed Management Authorities for the Wapsi and Cedar Rivers.
- Offer periodic public programs on topics of private lands conservation.
- Work with Benton County Conservation Staff to manage additional wetlands and public access adjacent to Koutny Pond.
- Continue efforts to enhance the southeast woodland at Crumbacher with mast-producing trees.
- Clean silt out of the mouth of the river connection at Cortright Wildlife Area.
- Maintain/replace wayfinding and park entrance signs as needed.

*In mid-March park facilities were closed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. By late May facilities had re-opened. The Conservation Board carefully assessed protocols to help promote safety for staff and visitors.*



## Parks and Recreation

Of the Conservation Board's 41 managed areas, some are considered parks where a significant portion of the area is maintained for picnicking, camping, and/or other facility-oriented activities.

During the year, the COVID-19 Pandemic affected facility management and public activities decisions. In early spring, all facilities were shot down, as per state order. As state restrictions were eased, the burden of decision-making fell squarely on the shoulders of the Conservation Board - with little state or federal leadership. In mid to late May, the Board began lifting restrictions, and by Memorial Day all facilities were open to the public. Care was exercised by establishing pandemic practices, such as requiring masks in the nature center display floor, use of an anti-viral mist sprayer in the nature center, cabins, and shower house, and promoting social distancing. Volunteers were not called back for regular shifts, so the nature center remained open only during regular staff weekday hours and campground hosts were not on duty. With all the turmoil, parks and recreation remained more popular than ever. Even with facilities closed, people found refuge and sanity during the crisis by escaping to parks and natural areas. Hunting license/tag purchases hit modern records during the spring turkey season. During the height of the initial pandemic response, Google Mobility Reports showed a 41% increase on average for Iowans traveling to parks

and recreation areas (March 29). By summer of 2020, this increase had grown to more than 200 percent!

Perhaps related to the recession taking place with COVID-19, park areas and campgrounds saw more homeless people. This presented challenges for park staff, trying to find the best means to uphold its rules regarding overnight stays in parks while recognizing the dire situations some of these people face.

Fontana Park is the most visited county area. More than two-thirds of all county residents, and many non-county residents, visit the park each year. The Fontana Interpretive Nature Center is among the most popular attractions. Exhibits were periodically changed to address new messages and the needs of repeat visitors. An additional 16 acres was added to the northeast portion of the park, with funding provided by donations from the Orlan Snyder Charitable Trust and Friends of Fontana Park. The Board spent significant time on a strategic planning, with the goal of producing a long-term Master Plan for the park. Also at Fontana Park, the Board received approval from FEMA to use mitigation funds to improve the steps access from the Main Shelter to Otter Creek. Funds also were secured through a successful grant application to the Buchanan County Community Foundation. Work on this project will be completed in fall of 2020.

The Conservation Board completed improvements and installation of new facilities at its access at Iron Bridge between Independence and Quasqueton, and making the area a “Gateway for River Use” for

people of all boating abilities. Grants and donations covered the cost of the projects, and included (\$266,145), Wellmark Foundation (\$73,715), Black Hawk County Gaming Association (\$34,715), Buchanan County Community Foundation (\$10,000); Tri-Rivers Waterfowlers, and Independence Lions Club (\$500). To provide improved safety along Nolen Avenue, the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors and County Engineer Brian Keierleber agreed to provide additional parking along the east side of the road. Paved trails provide access to all parking and amenities, and extend to the soft path trails of the Guy Grover Timber and Tree Plantings.

The Conservation Board has been replacing roofs on old shelters and latrines in outlying areas. New latrines were placed at the Iron Bridge and Three Elms accesses. Funds were budgeted to replace the roof on the Fontana Park Main Shelter. The Iowa DNR largely completed work on the long-anticipated transformation of the Littleton Dam to a stepped rock rapids. The area is at the Conservation Board managed Robert “Chic” McGlaughlin access, and the changes will improve safety, allow fish passage, and improve river habitat.

*Iron Bridge Access between Independence and Quasqueton*



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*Old wooden shakes on the historic 1851 Richardson-Jakway House continually presented problems. The wooden shakes were replaced with a steel roof designed to appear like the historic roof.*

The historic Richardson-Jakway House roof was replaced with steel resembling wooden shakes, but without the long-term drawback of not holding up. Funds were provided by the Richardson-Jakway Foundation and Friends of Fontana Park.

Recreational trails are important for public health, access to natural areas, and outdoor recreation. Soft trails were maintained in 14 public areas. The Conservation Director served on the Buchanan County Trails Association, was involved in plans for a trail system between Quasqueton and Cedar Rock, and supported efforts to enhance the Cedar Valley Nature Trail segment near Brandon (owned by Black Hawk County).

### **Future Park Development Objectives**

- Transform the unfinished building at the Fontana Park East Entrance into a rental cabin.
- Provide new nature center displays, as per the exhibit plan.
- Continue grooming ski trails at Fontana and Jakway Forest using volunteers.
- Continue to partner with Black Hawk County Conservation Board to provide improvements to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail segment in Buchanan County.
- Replace uneven and damaged railroad tie/granular steps leading from the Fontana Main Shelter to Otter Creek, with concrete steps and platforms.
- Repair cracks on Fontana’s west spillway wall and replace riprap.
- Consider a trail to link the west side of Fontana Park to Hazleton.
- Continue cooperative efforts for a regional park concept along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail.
- Develop a Master Plan with some cost opinions for Fontana Park.
- Begin work on Fontana Park Master Plan implementation, beginning with planting pasture and prairie for relocated bison and clearing areas for additional campsites.
- Evaluate use and potential for more cabins (Fontana Master Plan).
- Consider sites for season-long camping, and opportunities for full hookup sites (Fontana Master Plan).
- Work to expand Fontana Park’s boundaries to allow for additional facilities (Fontana Master Plan).
- Replace the roof on the Main Shelter at Fontana Park.
- Upgrade/replace playgrounds as per Long-term Plan. Consider plans for a “discovery” playground at Fontana Park.
- Work to expand maintenance storage near shop buildings (Fontana Master Plan).
- Assess feasibility of an all-weather lodge to accommodate 150 people (Fontana Master Plan).
- Consider water supply at Lime Creek should rural water service be offered.
- Upgrade Jakway and Lime Creek to 50-amp service.
- Consider adding reservable campsites and making the shelter at Jakway reservable online.
- Provide public wifi options for campgrounds.
- Work with Iowa DNR to make the new arch rapids and riverbank at the Robert “Chic” McGlaughlin Access (Littleton) more user-friendly for anglers and paddlers.



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## Environmental Education

Environmental education (EE) is an important strategy used by the Conservation Board to provide information and experiences that allow people to make more informed personal choices regarding conservation practices, natural resources protection, and environmental health, and to gain appreciation for the natural world. Programs are offered based on following topic objectives:

- sensitivity and awareness;
- local flora, fauna, and physical features;
- ecological concepts;
- problem solving skills; and
- ethics/human effects.

The program goal is that programs are designed so that no objective falls below 25% in total programs offered. During the year, this objective was met.

The COVID-19 Pandemic hit Iowa just as naturalists were readying for a busy season of spring school programs and opportunities to take groups outdoors. This all came to a screeching halt as schools were dismissed and regulations and guidance restricted group size and the naturalists' ability to interact with the public cancelling 345 previously scheduled group presentations. Naturalist staff time also was reduced in the spring due to COVID-19- related staff leave. With these hurdles in place, naturalists worked to find new ways to address Conservation Board for educating the public and fostering conservation and nature appreciation within our citizens. Still, programming participation numbers are down for the year in almost all categories. One exception is the number of adult/civic programs. This number is slightly up due to large statewide conference presentations made by the Director.

Techniques for the "COVID-19-Era" stressed promoting parks and natural areas and tools for self-guided learning. Educational information also was [presented via social media videos, tele-meetings, and newspaper articles. Some of the more creative COVID-related programming included:

- Nine Facebook Live video presentations (407 likes);
- Baby Bison Bingo - 25 individuals and families to 22 parks over six weeks in spring;
- Forest Fawn and Friends - 12 individuals and families to 33 parks over eight weeks;
- Science at home, monarchs - provided 14 families with monarch eggs, caterpillars, and information and activities;
- Four QR Code self-guided hikes (82 participants);
- Four ZOOM tele-meeting programs.

As facilities began to re-open, some in-person, outdoor programs were able to be held, with limited group size and social distancing.

*During "Baby Bison Bingo," people travelled to as many as 22 county natural areas to find the baby bison cutout. In so doing, people of all ages got off the beaten path and into some of the lesser-known areas of natural beauty managed by the Conservation Board.*



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www.buchanancountyparks.com is the Conservation Board's web site. Visitors to the site can access park information, upcoming programs and activities, volunteer and job opportunities, Conservation Board background information, a variety of downloadable publications and handouts, and more. People can also be involved by joining Fontana Park on Facebook!

www.mycountyparks.com contains information about Buchanan County's parks and programs, and also contains information about other county conservation programs throughout Iowa!

### **Educational Programming**

Programming occurred as normal through early March, but numbers reflect a large attendance absence for what is normally the busiest time of year (March-June). Still, 764 programs which had a total attendance of nearly 13,842 people. See page 36 for statistics breakdown

In addition to in-person presentations, many displays and other media were used to teach about nature and the environment. The Conservation Board maintained a strong presence via internet through www.buchanancountyparks.com, www.MyCountyParks.com web sites, tourism websites, a "Fontana Park" Facebook page, and an email listserve. Staff is engaged with local, regional, and state tourism groups to help spread the word within and outside of county borders. New nature center displays were installed, interpretive trails maintained, and Nature Play Areas were better signed.

### **School Programs**

Conservation Board staff provided 601 programs to students from area schools throughout the year (pre-school through college), with more than 10,000 students in attendance. Both outdoor field trips and in-class programs were offered. Emphasis was placed on getting youth outdoors, and the majority of programs featured an outside component. Most field trips were to Fontana Park, although students also visited other county parks (indicated in park listings on pages 17-27). Naturalists communicated with teachers to make sure presentations met curriculum and Conservation Board objectives. Among the many school programs custom designed to specific classrooms, the annual 5th Grade Field Day (all county 5th graders) was held. A popular "My Side of the Mountain" Winter Field Day (East Buchanan 7th Grade) also took place again this year. Naturalists continue to work with teachers and administrators to stress importance of outdoor programming and aspects of environmental education.

### **Youth and Camp Programs**

Fifty one presentations were made to youth groups, including scout, 4-H, library, and church groups, as well as youth enrolled in Conservation Board camps, with attendance of 904 participants. Youth progressed from preschool participants in the Wee Nature Tales (ages 3-5), to the Nature Explorers (ages 6-8), and on to Young Naturalists (ages 9-12), but only with much reduced groups sizes and reduced overall attendance due to COVID-19. The annual River Raiders overnight canoe trip was cancelled. A Prairie Playground Club was developed to take kids outdoors at a school site. A Buchanan/Benton County youth trip to the BWCAW was scheduled for July, 2020, but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.



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### **Public Programs and Adult Education**

Environmental education does not stop with youth. There were 100 programs offered during the year for families and adult participation. Of these, 39 programs were requested by civic groups, senior centers,

and nursing homes. Topics for the 61 programs advertised to the general public are listed in the appendices. A series of “Animal Encounters” continued to be popular in the Fontana Wildlife Display. Other program series included Nature Kids (3-5 year-olds) and an adult education series - Older, Wiser, Livelier Souls (OWLS). OWLS programs included trips to county parks and natural areas. Public programs were advertised through local newspapers, radios stations, postings, and through the Conservation Board’s Facebook, website, listserves, and links from other websites. The Conservation Board promoted and provided space for the Fontana Herb Society.

**Interpretive Resources**

In addition to in-person programs, educational efforts include publications, self-guided trails, displays, web sites, and other media. Since its inception, the Nature Center has drawn visitors from all 50 states and more than 70 foreign countries. The Nature Center and Wildlife Displays continue to be very popular. These displays require a lot of upkeep and enhancement, and receive financial support from the nonprofit group Friends of Fontana Park. Interpretive signs exist on self-guided trails in Jakway Forest and Fontana Park woodland. An outdoor kiosk display was changed with the seasons. Kiosks and signage also exists on topics of a pioneer homestead (Jakway), sustainable cabins (Fontana), fens (Rowley Fen and Fairbank Fen), Wapsipinicon River Corridor (Grover Timber), and Wapsipinicon River Water Trail (Quasqueton and Independence). Other interpretive resources included four issues of the Otter Creek Quarterly, web sites (buchanancountyparks.com, mycountyparks.com, Iowa tourism, and www.tripadvisor.com), and a Facebook page and conservation listserve. A new placard to advertise and direct people to the Conservation Board websites was completed through a volunteer project..

**Future Objectives for Environmental Education**

- Disseminate program information and provide teacher inservice training.
- Determine the ability for naturalists to engage students and to conduct other programming during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Increase participation in outdoor recreation and service learning especially for older youth.
- Coordinate and promote field trips to conservation board and school nature areas, with the objective of participation by every Buchanan County elementary school classroom.
- Increase engagement with youth and adult groups in special projects such as cleanups, water testing, invasive species removal, etc.
- Provide environmental issues instruction, with an objective of one 6-12 grade level participating at each county school annually.
- Coordinate and promote field trips to the Richardson-Jakway Historic Site, with the objective of participation of at least one 4-8 grade level from each school district.
- Promote “nature play” areas, include modeling use during field trips.
- Host at least one educator training at the nature center annually.
- Make reference materials and activity guides available to teachers, and advertise this availability.



Information about upcoming public education program and other activities sponsored by the Conservation Board is included in the Conservation Board newsletter – the Otter Creek Quarterly.



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- Conduct one or more public service learning programs, such as cleanups and invasive species removal annually.
- Conduct at least one program annually geared to private landowner implementing conservation practices on their land.
- Offer at least 40 programs per year for participation by the general public.
- Offer summer educational/recreational programs for pre-school and school age children.
- Market and present programs to local civic groups.
- Conduct Outdoor Adventures-type programming for 7-12 graders.
- Offer a minimum of two public programs annually that bring people of all ages to outlying county natural areas.
- Offer at least four Older Wiser Livelier Souls (OWLS) programs to promote outlying natural areas.
- Better promote/market Conservation Board sponsored programs through media, postings, and contact with various groups.
- Offer adult-oriented programs on in-depth conservation topics annually, such as those presented as Master Conservationist and Master River Stewards Program, at least biannually.
- Publish the Otter Creek Quarterly
- Make substantial changes in nature center displays at least annually, as per the Exhibit Plan (new displays, traveling displays, on-loan exhibits).
- Use the intern program to, a minimum, produce a quality, written, original educational activity for inclusion in county curricula guides, and a substantial, new educational exhibit.
- Make quarterly updates to the outdoor kiosk near the playground at Fontana Park. Consider placement of a second kiosk.
- Educate people about the REAP Program and the Iowa's Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.
- Maintain strong Conservation Board web site and social media presence. Use this media to interact with school groups, the public, and other users.
- Maintain databases for targeting marketing of program and events.

## Conservation Volunteers

*(Volunteers are listed in Appendix D)*

Volunteers are an important part of Conservation Board programs and activities, providing both physical assistance and visible public support. Since its opening in 1994, volunteers have been instrumental to nature center operations. Nature center volunteers act as receptionists, and assist in preparation of newsletter mailings, which are assembled by volunteers at the Independence Senior Center. Since 1994, Nature center receptionist volunteers have donated 13,142 hours of service. At the current basic minimum hourly wage of \$7.25, the total dollar value of this service is \$95,280. This year, 23 nature center receptionist volunteers contributed 683 hours!

Volunteer activities largely came to a halt in mid-March due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Conservation Board and Staff did not want to potentially expose volunteers to contracting the virus. The absence of volunteers was especially felt with our inability to keep the nature center open on weekends and some weekday time slots. Campground hosts also stopped assisting in campgrounds, with the newsletter, and other aspects which require gathering with other people. The March Volunteer Training and annual recognition were cancelled.



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There are 18 areas in which people may volunteer. During the year, dozens of volunteers monitored nest boxes, developed and maintained herb and landscape plantings, conducted cleanups, served as campground hosts, helped with educational programs, helped with mailings, fundraised with Friends of Fontana Park and the Richardson-Jakway Foundation, and picked up litter. Volunteers were recognized during a spring luncheon.

### **Future Volunteer Program Objectives**

- Better distribute the Volunteers brochure.
- Host a Volunteer Recognition event.
- Recruit more nature center receptionists and campground hosts.
- Better communicate the volunteer program in media.
- Continue using volunteers as much as possible in the 18 areas of need.

## **Board and Staff Development**

### **Conservation Board Background**

County conservation boards are agencies of county government created by statute (Chapter 350.1 of the Code of Iowa). They have broad policy-making responsibilities in the area of local conservation, education, and recreation programs. Conservation boards are relatively autonomous, and control all properties and set the direction for conservation programs. Conservation boards address diverse matters for parks, preserves, museums, recreation, wildlife management, and education. The Conservation Board consists of five county residents, appointed to staggered, five-year terms by the Board of Supervisors. Members of the Board are appointed on the basis of their demonstrated interest in conservation matters and serve without pay.

The Conservation Board functions as a corporate body, making group policy decisions that then are implemented by the Executive Director, who is responsible to the Board. Other staff are hired by the Executive Director with Board approval, and are directly responsible to the Executive Director. Conservation Board members, with the expiration dates of their terms, are listed to the right.

The Conservation Board was involved with various facilities, programming and staff policies during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A lot of strategic planning was undertaken as the Board acquired additional land at Fontana Park and started toward a goal of a long-term Master Plan. Most Board members attended the Iowa County Conservation System Annual

Conference held in Louisa and Muscatine counties. In December, Board member Karen Stephenson resigned her position and was replaced by Mary Jean Blaisdell through a Board of Supervisors appointment.



### **Conservation Board Term Expirations**

- Mary Jean Blaisdell, 12/31/20
- Anita Miller, 12/31/21
- Loren Hamilton, 12/31/22
- Andy Crump, 12/31/23
- Ronnie Wolfe, 12/31/24

**Below:** During its December Meeting, Karen Stephenson (middle) was recognized for her nine years of dedicated service as a member of the Conservation Board. Others present (from left): Conservation Board Members Ron Wolfe and Loren Hamilton, Conservation Director Dan Cohen, Board of Supervisor Clayton Ohrt, and Conservation Board Members Anita Miller and Andy Crump.

# FY20 Conservation Board Staff



Dan Cohen, Executive Director



Mike Van Raden, Park Ranger



Jeremy Whittle, Park Ranger



Sondra Cabell, Interpretive Naturalist



Michael Maas, Interpretive Naturalist



Chris Hansen, Conservation Tech.



Steve Sauer, Conservation Tech.

## Staff Development

Conservation Department staff are encouraged to further their professional development. Park rangers and technicians kept current on all necessary chemical applicator and Mine Safety Health Administration certifications, as required. All field staff and one naturalist attended the Iowa Association of County Conservation Board Employees annual training. Park rangers attended County Conservation Peace Officer Association trainings. Naturalists attended workshops and training provided by the Iowa Association of Naturalists. The Director and a Naturalists attended training on the MyCountyParks website. The Director attended meetings and training provided by the Iowa County Conservation System (ICCS), IACCBE, Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC), County Conservation Directors Association, and attended regular Safety Committee, Department Heads, and Trails Association meetings. The Director served on the ISAC Legislative and CoSTAR Committees. A Naturalist also attends County Wellness Meetings.

As the COVID-19 Pandemic blossomed, staff with the exception of the Director were placed on leave for a few weeks. One staff person remained on partial leave for a longer period to provide home day care. One seasonal conservation technician position was not filled. This disruption of staffing was a unique challenge in this year of COVID-19.

## Staff Roster

### Full time Staff

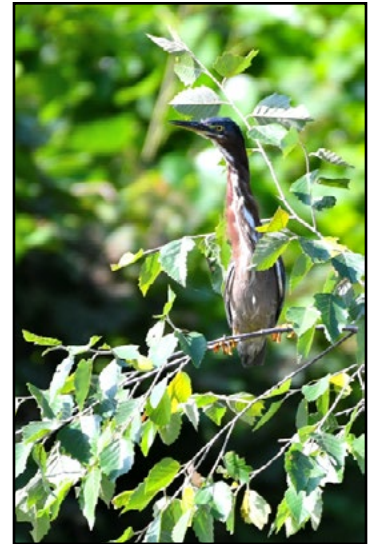
Dan Cohen, Director.....	1/13/86
Mike Van Raden, Park Ranger.....	7/1/90
Jeremy Whittle, Park Ranger.....	8/14/06
Chris Hansen, Conservation Technician.....	5/15/00
Steve Sauer, Conservation Technician.....	9/18/17 - 7/8/19
James Mount, Conservation Tech.....	9/16/19
Michael Maas, Conservation Technician (11/9/15); Naturalist.....	8/7/17
Sondra Cabell, Naturalist.....	5/30/01

### Part time and Seasonal Staff

Elaine Walker, Office Manager.....	2/17/10
Diane Johnson, Secretary/Volunteer Coordinator.....	10/10/12
Andrew Anderson, Seasonal Cons. Tech.....	4/16/18 - 8/11/18; 4/16/19 - 8/24/19
Jacob Schwarting, Seasonal Cons. Tech....	4/16/18 - 8/11/18; 4/15/19 - 8/24/19; 5/4/20
Samantha Hanson, Seasonal Naturalist Intern.....	5/6/19 - 9/21/20
Bailey Bergman, Seasonal Naturalist Intern.....	5/19/20

**Future objectives**

- Continue strategic planning with emphasis on the Fontana Park Master Plan.
- Conduct an annual Board Field Day with all Board Members.
- Continue monitoring COVID-19 and updating policies as appropriate.
- Update Board rules, regulations, and applicable ordinances, and communicate these to the public as applicable.
- All Board Members attend training conference as they are provided.
- Conduct an update of the 5-year Needs Assessment Survey.
- Assist in planning statewide and regional training workshops.
- Maintain a minimum of 24 hours of professional development for full-time staff, and 20 hours for board members.
- Work to retain quality and dedicated staff.



*Green heron perches in a tree along the Wapsipinicon River at Cortright Wildlife Area.*

**Buchanan County Conservation at a Glance**

<u>Facilities</u>	
Total number of areas managed.....	41
Total acres managed.....	3,059
River accesses (with designated ramps).....	5
Lakes/ponds/reservoirs with fish.....	5
River/stream fishing.....	23
Areas open to hunting.....	31
Modern campgrounds.....	3
Primitive campgrounds.....	3
Number of picnic shelters.....	9
Shower houses.....	2
Group campgrounds.....	1
Hard surface trail.....	1
Interpretive trails (signed).....	3
Hiking/walking trails.....	15
Ski trails.....	2
Nature center.....	1
Live wildlife displays.....	1
Historical interpretive sites.....	3
<u>Visitors and participation (FY20)</u>	
Nature center Guest Book Sign-in (July-February).....	5,779
Fontana campground users.....	1,717
Jakway campground users.....	451
Lime Creek campground users.....	228
Participants in environmental education programs.....	13,842

**Areas and Facilities**

The following are descriptions of Conservation Board areas and facilities, and highlighted activities during the past year. Not described are routine maintenance activities such as mowing, maintaining roads and fences, janitorial, patrolling, administration, and public relations.

**Conservation Board Areas (key)**

A – Location;      C – Current management  
 B – Acquisition    D – Activities during the year



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Listings and descriptions of parks, wildlife management areas, and wildlife refuges are available by visiting the Conservation Board's website: [www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com). Also included on the website are aerial photos, videos, and options for reserving facilities or registering for educational programs.

### **1. Fontana Park - 144 acres**

- A. Fontana Park is located one mile south of Hazleton, off Highway 150.
- B. The original 128 acres were acquired in 1959, and since that time Fontana has been the base of operations and location of administrative offices for the Conservation Board. Six acres were added in 1998 with the donation of the Jarrett-Slater addition. Four acres were added at the East Entrance in 2016, purchased from Rick See. In 2020, 16 acres were added to the northeast corner of the park, purchased from the Lohman Estate.
- C. Fontana Park offers modern and primitive camping, two cabins, a shower house, a live animal display, 20-acre lake (reservoir) and Otter Creek, woodland, prairie plots, three picnic shelters, chapel area, interpretive and ski trails, hard surface and soft trails, stream and lake fishing, educational plantings, and a nature center. Management practices relate to visitor use, park and recreation area development, live wildlife and other outdoor exhibits, educational and recreational programming, and natural areas management. Conservation Board offices, and most of the maintenance shops and equipment storage, are at Fontana Park. Fontana Park is the most visited of Conservation Board-managed properties, and the place that introduces citizens to Conservation Board facilities and programs. It is the main destination for educational field trips and public programs.
- D. Sixteen acres were added to the northeast corner of the park. A crop rental agreement was continued on this property while the Board deliberated future use of the property. The nature center had several updates. Work continued on a touch-screen video display featuring parks and natural areas, and information about various amenities and activities. The Board considered use options for the building near the east entrance. New Nature Play Area signs were placed to help promote youth lifestyle of spending time in natural places. Funding for a more permanent fix to the steps from the Main Shelter to Otter Creek, and to repair cracks and riprap areas at the west spillway was secured through FEMA mitigation and a successful Buchanan County Community Foundation grant. The walking bridge in the woodland was assessed by the County Engineer, and needs to be replaced within four years. Tree plantings were enhanced and maintained in areas of the woodland. A QR Code trail was placed in spring.

### **2. Jakway Forest - 315 acres**

- A. Located 1 1/2 miles south of Aurora off W45.
- B. Acquired in 1968, 1970, 1971, 1973 with Land and Water Conservation Act Grant Funds.
- C. Managed for modern and primitive camping, picnicking, public hunting, interpretive trails, equestrian riding, hiking, ski trails; disc golf, and a historic site. Ongoing Timber Stand Improvement (TSI): 100-year rotation on approximately 200 acres of timber. Contains a shower house with modern restrooms, a storm shelter, dump station, disc golf course, two pit latrines, wildlife observation blind, picnic shelter, staff residence, heritage plantings, and the Richardson-Jakway Historic Site.
- D. A new steel roof was placed on the historic Richardson-Jakway House. East Buchanan Telephone installed lines to provide wifi in the campground. Seedling trees were planted in the 4.9-acre 2019 management clearcut. Buckthorn, garlic mustard, and multiflora rose remain the main invasive species concern in the timber, and efforts were made to control these species. A fall pioneer supper was held as a public program and fundraiser for the Richardson-Jakway Historic Site (the spring supper was cancelled due to COVID-19. School field trips were conducted. Nest boxes were maintained.



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**3. Buffalo Creek Area - 85 acres**

- A. Located one mile East of Winthrop off HWY D22.
- B. Acquired in 1961. In 1998, 1.5 acres on the east side were donated by Dr. A.J. Murphy.
- C. Managed for picnicking, hiking, and public hunting. Natural areas include a bottomland woodland, ponds, and constructed prairie. Contains a pit latrine and shelter house. A walking trail is maintained around the park area and to a pond.
- D. A pit toilet restroom was installed near the new pavilion, and the old latrine was demolished. The 2018 tree plantings were maintained through pruning and mowing. The area was used during school field trips. Nest boxes were monitored. Frog and toad surveys were conducted.



*The public is invited to participate in frog and toad surveys at Buffalo Creek Area and several other Conservation Board areas.*

**4. Lime Creek Area - 45 acres**

- A. Located 1.5 miles northeast of Brandon.
- B. 39 acres were acquired in 1964. A six-acre addition was donated by Lime Creek Fish & Game Club in 1985.
- C. Managed for modern and primitive camping, and for public hunting during fall and winter. Natural area is managed as a riverine woodland. Contains two pit latrines, a playground, swing-set, and two shelter houses.
- D. Mussels were reintroduced into the creek, and are being monitored by students from Iowa State University. Normal maintenance and patrolling. Nest boxes were maintained.

**5. Boies Bend Area - 26 acres**

- A. Located 1.5 miles west of Quasqueton.
- B. Acquired in 1967.
- C. Managed for primitive camping, picnicking, river fishing with stairway access, restored prairie, woodland, and public hunting. Contains a pit toilet.
- D. Woody plants were cut from the prairie. Normal maintenance and patrolling. Education programs were held.

**6. Otter Creek Roadside Park - 13 acres**

- A. One mile south of Oelwein at the intersection of Highways 150 and 281.
- B. Acquired as former FEMA buyout property in 2002 from the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors.
- C. Managed as a roadside park with walking and ski trails, picnicking, fishing, canoe access, and a savanna planting.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

**7. Cutshall Area - 67 acres**

- A. Located 4.5 miles north of Jesup off V62.
- B. Acquired in 1959.
- C. Managed for picnicking, primitive camping, and public hunting. Natural area is managed as riverine wetland and timber. Trail is maintained for a Water Trail put-in, and along the river. Contains a picnic shelter.
- D. Much of the area was flooded several times. Trees planted in the former picnic shelter area were maintained. Nest boxes were monitored. Frog and toad surveys were conducted.

*A summary of rules and regulations are posted at each Conservation Board area. Complete rules and regulation ordinances are available for download at [www.buchanancountyparks.com](http://www.buchanancountyparks.com).*



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**8. Patton Prairie - 45 acres**

- A. Located southwest of Aurora off Quonset Ave.
- B. Acquired in 1998 with REAP Grant Funds
- C. Managed as a native prairie and wetland with public hunting.
- D. Invasive woody plants were cut and sprayed. Nest boxes were maintained.

**9. Otter Creek Wildlife Area - 99 acres**

- A. Located on west edge of Hazleton, adjacent to Fontana Park.
- B. Acquired 1965, 1969, 1973, and 1983 with some parcels receiving LWCF Grant Funds and one parcel donated. In 2014, 0.137 acres were impacted during construction of a new bridge. In return, 0.161 acres was purchased by Secondary Roads to become part of the Otter Creek Wildlife Area.
- C. Managed as a nature preserve and wetland habitat with public fishing at the pier.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling. Frog and toad surveys were conducted.

**10. Nibeck Nature Preserve - 33 acres**

- A. Located adjacent to the north city limits of Hazleton.
- B. Twenty acres were acquired in 1981, bequeathed by Leora Nibeck. An additional 7.5 acres were purchased from Chad Dettbarn in 2013.
- C. Managed as a nature preserve.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

**11. Van Laningham Wildlife Area - 3 acres**

- A. Located 4.5 miles east and 4.5 miles north of Independence.
- B. Acquired by gift from Thurman and Veva Van Laningham in 1967.
- C. Managed for wildlife habitat.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

**12. Sand Creek Area - 80 acres**

- A. Located three miles east and three miles south of Quasqueton.
- B. Acquired in 1971.
- C. Managed for public hunting and fishing on the Wapsipicon River. A trail is maintained from the parking area to the river.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling. Nest boxes were maintained.

**13. Pine Creek Area - 40 acres**

- A. Located five miles southeast of Independence.
- B. Acquired in 1971.
- C. Managed for public hunting, fishing, and native hard maple woodland.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling. Nest boxes were maintained.

**14. Rowley Fen - 43 acres**

- A. Located 0.5 mile northwest of Rowley.
- B. Acquired in 1984.
- C. Managed for unique fen habitat, restored prairie, and public hunting. The area was designated an Iowa Registered Natural Area in 1986.
- D. Nest boxes were monitored. Frog and toad surveys were conducted.



*Grass-of-Parnassus is one of the rare fen indicator plants found at Rowley Fen.*



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**15. Koutny Pond-Hoffman Woods - 106 acres**

- A. Located one mile east of Brandon.
- B. Acquired in 1985.
- C. Managed for wildlife habitat, public hunting and fishing. Includes a 12-acre lake with two fishing jetties, 23-acre managed wetland, latrine, walk-in boat access, and prairie plantings. In 2017, USF&WS helped fund replacement of water control structures for the lake and wetland to the east. An adjoining wetland owned by Benton County was constructed in 2020.
- D. The wetland project north of the pond was completed with funds from the Upper Cedar River Watershed Management Authority, and is owned by Benton County. The 17-acre project includes perennial, seasonal wetlands and a prairie buffer. The wetland area east of the pond was monitored, and water levels were manipulated to produce better habitat for migrating waterfowl. Iowa DNR conducts annual turtle catch-and-release surveys. Nest boxes were monitored. Education programs were held.

**16. Mickey Fox Area - 118 acres**

- A. Located five miles north of Jesup off V62.
- B. Sixty acres acquired in 1960. In 2003, an additional 37.10 acres were acquired from the Melvin and Lila Anderson Estate with funding from REAP. In January, 2013, an additional 21 acres was purchased from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation which had previously purchased the land from the Johnson Estate to hold while grants were being written. Funding came largely from REAP, Buchanan County Pheasants Forever, and Buchanan County Wildlife Association.
- C. Managed for public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat.
- D. A tornado caused extensive damage in the adjoining state Cutshall area, blocking access to Mickey Fox for several weeks. Normal maintenance and patrolling. Nest boxes were maintained.

**17. Putty Root Preserve - 17 acres**

- A. Located three miles northwest of Quasqueton.
- B. Original five acres acquired in 1962. Ten acres acquired 1992 from Delbert Crow and two acres acquired from Betty Payne in 1996.
- C. Managed as an old growth oak-hickory woodland preserve. The putty root orchid, for which the parcel is named, grows here.
- D. An all-staff garlic mustard pulling day was held, along with additional pulling, burning, and spraying of garlic mustard. Normal maintenance and patrolling. An education program was conducted.

*Conservation Director Dan Cohen displays a clump of garlic mustard. Truckloads of this invasive species were removed from Putty Root Preserve and other areas in spring.*



**18. Crumbacher Wildlife Area - 368 acres**

- A. Located 3.5 miles southwest of Independence.
- B. Acquired in 1989. The first 320 acres were acquired with Habitat Stamp Grant funds. Fifty one acres were acquired with funds from Buchanan County Pheasants Forever, German Shorthair Club, and Buchanan County Wildlife Association.
- C. Managed for forest, prairie, and wetland habitat, and public hunting.
- D. Brush and invasive species control are ongoing, labor-intensive tasks in native and reconstructed prairies. A sunflower food plot was planted. The area was used for a school field trip. Nest boxes were monitored.



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A group of area nature enthusiasts explore the Bearbower Sand Prairie during a public field day.

### **19. Bearbower Sand Prairie - 40 acres**

- A. Located two miles west of Highway 150, off Buchanan-Benton Road.
- B. Acquired in 1988 with public/private cost share grant funds by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (many donors were involved) and then transferred to the Iowa DNR. The Conservation Board assumed a management agreement with the Iowa DNR in 1995.
- C. Managed for preservation and enhancement of the unique sand prairie, public hunting, and nature appreciation. Fragile prickly pear and ornate box turtles are among the species drawing attention from researchers.
- D. Nest boxes were monitored. A public field day was held. Local herpetologists have been monitoring the box turtle population.

### **20. Blazing Star Prairie - 7.5 acres**

- A. Located two miles east and 1 1/4 miles south of Rowley.
- B. Acquired in 1987 by cooperative efforts of the Conservation Board, Buchanan County Chapter of Pheasants Forever, Buchanan County Wildlife Association, and the Cedar-Wapsi Chapter of the Lutheran Brotherhood.
- C. Managed as native prairie habitat with public hunting.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

### **21. Swartz Preserve - 4 acres**

- A. Located 5.5 miles east of Hazleton at the junction of C57 and W33.
- B. Acquired in 1991 by conservation easement from Mr. & Mrs. Ormel Swartz.
- C. Managed for wetland habitat and as a wildlife preserve.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

### **22. Bryantsburg Prairie Preserve - 1.5 acres**

- A. Located two miles south of Hazleton on Highway 150.
- B. Acquired in 1988 by conservation easement from Mr. & Mrs. Henry Brandt.
- C. Managed as a native prairie preserve.
- D. The area was used for monarch tagging and releases, and for several school field trips and public programs.

### **23. Schneider-Heinick-Rowe Wildlife Area - 20 acres**

- A. Located three miles east and 3.5 miles south of Quasqueton.
- B. Acquired in 1996 by Buchanan County Pheasants Forever, Tri-Rivers Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited, Lime Creek Fish & Game Club, Littleton Hookanliners Club, and the Buchanan County Wildlife Association.
- C. Managed for woodland and wetland wildlife habitat. Some rare plants are found on the site.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling. Nest boxes were monitored.



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**24. Three Elms Area - 75 acres**

- A. Located one mile southeast of Independence.
- B. Acquired in 1964.
- C. Managed for wildlife habitat, river access, fishing, and mountain biking. In 2015, the Buchanan County Four Seasons Trails Association established the mountain bike trail and entered into an agreement to conduct trail maintenance. Contains a boat ramp built with Marine Boat Fuel Tax Grant funds, handicap fishing, picnic shelter, prairie plot, and latrine.
- D. The area receives high use. The archery and trails clubs discontinued volunteer maintenance of the trails and area around shelter, requiring increase maintenance by staff. The access was used during public and school field trip floats. A QR code self-guided trail was posted. Nest boxes were monitored. Frog and toad surveys were conducted. Off-road ATV use is a problem, and several people were cited.

**25. Frogville Access - 135 acres**

- A. Located three miles northwest of Troy Mills.
- B. Original 96 acres acquired in 1978 with LWCF Funds. An additional 20 acres were acquired with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant funds in 1997.
- C. Managed for public hunting and fishing.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

**26. Troy Mills Access - 63 acres**

- A. Located three miles east and 4.5 miles south of Quasqueton.
- B. 23 acres acquired in 1969. 40 acres acquired in 1981 with Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grant funds.
- C. Managed for forest, fishing, hunting, and Wapsipinicon River access. The DNR owns 11.5 acres under a long term management agreement with the Conservation Board. Camping is allowed. Contains a boat ramp.
- D. Nest boxes were monitored. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

**27. Wapsi River Access - 51 acres**

- A. Located 0.5 miles northwest of Independence.
- B. Acquired in 1963 and 1964.
- C. Managed for picnicking, fishing, river access, and hunting. Contains a pit toilet and picnic shelter.
- D. Snowmobilers used the area in winter to access the Wapsi. Ruts from off-road drivers were fixed. Nest boxes were monitored. Frog and toad surveys were conducted. Educational paddling programs were held.

**28. Iron Bridge Woodland and River Access - 34 acres**

- A. Located 4.5 miles northwest of Quasqueton.
- B. Access acquired in 1996 from Buchanan County Secondary Roads, which manages the bridge. An additional 33 acres were acquired in 2012 from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation which had previously purchased the land from the Laverne Kress Estate. Major funding came from grants from the Wildlife Habitat Stamp Program, Buchanan County Pheasants Forever, Buchanan County Wildlife Association, Buchanan County Tri-Rivers Waterfowlers, National Wild Turkey Federation, and Iowa Whitetails Unlimited.
- C. Managed for nature appreciation with public hunting, fishing, and river access, and as a historic site. Contains a boat launch constructed with a Waters Access Grant and a circa 1872 Bowstring Arch Bridge.



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- D. A major upgrade to the river access was completed, including expanded, paved parking, added overhead lights, added restroom, and ramps with a universal launch to meet needs of diverse users. Paved trails were installed and lengthened to go under Nolen Ave. to the Guy Grover and Tree Planting parking area. The parking at the Grover area also was greatly expanded. The project scored high on several successful grant applications, and grant awards and donations covered costs related to the Access. Buchanan County Supervisors and Secondary Roads agreed to broaden the parking area along the east side of Nolen Avenue to alleviate traffic concerns.

**29. Newton Township Natural Area - 158 acres**

- A. Located nine miles southeast of Quasqueton.
- B. Acquired with REAP Grant Funds in 1998.
- C. Managed as a riverine woodland with public hunting, fishing, and canoe access to Buffalo Creek.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrol.



*Compass plant growing in a Hodges and North Wildlife Area Prairie*

**30. Hodges and North Wildlife Area – 67 acres**

- A. Located one mile south of the Jesup Highway Interchange, off V65.
- B. Acquired in 2001 by a donation of Basic Materials Co. Inc., Waterloo.
- C. Managed as restored prairie and wetland, with public hunting and fishing.
- D. Crown vetch is the major weed problem along the pond and in the prairies, and burning and spraying is ongoing. Nest boxes were monitored. A vehicle drove through the post/cable parking lot. Rather than maintain such a large area, barricades and cables were placed to make the parking smaller.

**31. Buffalo Creek Wildlife Area - 54 acres**

- A. Located six miles south of Winthrop off W45.
- B. Acquired in 1969.
- C. Managed for riverine woodland habitat, public hunting, and stream fishing. The road to the Wildlife Area is managed by Secondary Roads with limited maintenance.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrol.

**32. Hoover Area - 20 acres**

- A. Located three miles east and 3.5 miles south of Quasqueton.
- B. Acquired in 1962.
- C. Managed for wildlife habitat and public hunting.
- D. Normal maintenance and patrol.

**33. Fairbank Fen – 40 acres**

- A. Located two miles east of Fairbank, a half mile off Highway 281.
- B. Acquired by the Conservation Board in August, 2002, with funding from Buchanan County and State Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Fairbank Gun Club, Buchanan County Wildlife Association, INHF and Kirkwood Wetland Students, and Hookanliners Club.
- C. Managed as a prairie and wetland fen, with picnicking and public hunting.
- D. Litter is an ongoing problem, especially spent shells from target shooting.



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**34. Anderson Addition to Cutshall Park – 24 acres**

- A. Located four miles north of Jesup, off Highway V62.
- B. Purchased along with the Addition to the Mickey Fox Area on November 21, 2003 from the Lila Anderson Estate, with a REAP Grant. A donation from Buchanan County Pheasants Forever paid for a 6.5-acre prairie reconstruction.
- C. Managed as river bottom timber, riverine wetlands, and restored prairie upland, with public hunting.
- D. Bluebird and wood duck boxes were maintained and monitored.

**35. Ham Marsh – 54 acres**

- A. Located four miles northwest of Independence, off Indiana Avenue.
- B. Purchased in 2006 from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation which had served as an intermediary in a bargain sale from the John and Maxine Ham Family. Ten acres had been protected in 1985 with a life estate agreement. These ten acres were donated to the Conservation Board, and 45 acres purchased, to secure the property.
- C. Managed as a glacial wetland marsh, sedge meadow, and restored prairie, with public hunting. A small area of hay ground is maintained for wildlife habitat and hay production for Conservation Board use.
- D. Hay ground was mowed and baled for feeding bison at Fontana Park. Nest boxes were maintained and monitored. The area was used for birding, monarch tagging, geocaching, wetland programs, and school field trips. Frog and toad surveys were conducted.



*Common whitetail dragonfly (female)  
at Ham Marsh.*

**36. Cortright Wildlife Area - 190 Acres**

- A. Located one mile southeast of Littleton, off River Road.
- B. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) purchased 152 acres from Kevan Cortright, which the Conservation Board repurchased from INHF in 2008, with grants from the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), REAP, Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund, Iowa Pheasants Forever Build A Wildlife Area (BAWA) program, Iowa Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Buchanan County Wildlife Association, Buchanan County Pheasants Forever, and the Kirkwood Wetland Students. The 34-acre Hookanliner Addition was acquired from the Hookanliner Sportsmen in 2010. A REAP grant, and Buchanan County Pheasants Forever and Wildlife Association, funded the acquisition. Four acres adjacent to the southeast corner were purchase from James and Kathy Brown in 2010. Fish Habitat Grant funds paid for a river reconnection project, completed at the southeast ponds in 2010.
- C. Managed as forest and forested wetlands, with a mile of Wapsipinicon Riverfront; restored timber and prairie areas; ponds; and for public hunting, fishing, picnicking, hiking, and nature appreciation.
- D. Illegal shooting within 200 yards of a residence was identified as a problem, and a trail was altered and more signs placed to inform park users. ATV use continued to be a problem. Several field trips were conducted. Nest boxes were maintained and monitored.



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**37. Robert “Chic” McGlaughlin Easement Area – 6 acres**

- A. Located at the Littleton Dam, off Highway D16.
- B. The Iowa DNR purchased a public use easement from the Robert and Betty McGlaughlin Family. The land has since been sold to Craig and Nancy Coventry, with the easement attached. The easement covers a stretch of land along the Wapsipinicon River and the east half of the

**Potential Acquisition Criteria**

*The Conservation Board places a high priority on land protection in Buchanan County. Acquisition is one method, and is appropriate in certain circumstances. The Conservation Board often uses the following criteria when evaluating land for possible acquisition:*

- Presence of unique ecosystems or endangered species
- Degree of vulnerability to destruction or loss
- Whether the property enhances an existing area of habitat (greenbelts and additions)
- Size and value to wildlife
- Costs involved



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Littleton Dam. The Conservation Board signed a Management Agreement with the DNR in February, 2009 to manage and maintain the land, not including the dam. The DNR controls management of the dam.

- C. Managed for public river access, fishing, and portage around the dam.
- D. The DNR still is finishing up the project that removed/modified the dam to improve safety and improve the health of the river. There are occasional law enforcement issues/complaints at the access.

**38. Wehner Woods – 30 acres**

- A. Located at the northeast corner of Lamont.
- B. The Conservation Board entered into a 15-year contract to purchase the property from Nels and JoAnne Wehner on August 18, 2009.
- C. Managed as river bottom and upland timber, riverine wetlands, and nature appreciation, with public hunting and a nature trail. A Lamont resident is contracted to keep the lot and trails mowed.
- D. Nest boxes were monitored. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

**39. Guy Grover Timber and Tree Plantings – 204 acres**

- A. Located three miles east of Quasqueton. The area is divided into east and west parcels, connected by a path that goes through private land.
- B. Guy and Shirley Grover donated 186 acres to the Conservation Board in December, 2011. The property includes a conservation easement granted to Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in 2007. The easement is perpetual and tied to the land. In 2015, 15 acres were purchased from Justin Kuhn, connecting the east side to the river.
- C. Managed for river bottom and upland timber, riverine wetlands, prairie savanna, a fishing pond, nature trails, and public hunting and fishing. The pond contains two fishing jetties.
- D. The road right-of-way between the two lots was transformed into a large parking area with paved trail access extending under Nolen Avenue to the Iron Bridge Access. The easement area was checked by INHF staff. Trees and shrubs were removed from the small native prairie on the south hillside. Nest boxes were monitored. Educational programs were held. A QR Code trail was placed in spring.

**40. Quigley-Slattery Heritage Prairie – 33 acres**

- A. Located four miles northeast of Winthrop The area is a high quality, native mesic prairie and wetland.
- B. The area was owned for a long time by the Quigley family, and had been protected in grassland reserve. In 2011, the property and surrounding farm land was sold to Jerry Slattery, who attempted to convert parts of the prairie-wetland to row crop agriculture, but ended up selling 33 acres to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in 2012. The Conservation Board and INHF submitted successful grant requests and donor requests to recoup the cost. Major funding was secured from: REAP, the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant program; Iowa Pheasants Forever State Council; Buchanan, Linn, Clayton, and Black Hawk County Chapters of Pheasants Forever; Iowa’s Living Roadway Trust Fund; Buchanan County Wildlife Association; and Iowa Prairie Network. In March, 2015, the Conservation Board took possession of the property.
- C. Managed to enhance the prairie and wetland qualities for public education, hunting, and nature appreciation.
- D. Nest boxes were monitored. Normal maintenance and patrolling.

**41. Roberts Wildlife Area – 109 acres**

- A. Located six miles northeast of Jesup. The area connects two other properties in the Wapsipinicon River Corridor, including the County’s Cutshall Area and Black Hawk County’s Wilson Woods, resulting in 512 contiguous acres of public wildlife Area. It contains a variety of wetlands, river bottom forest, upland pasture and tree plantings, and Wapsipinicon River shoreline.
- B. The area was part of the Harris Estate, and a right of first refusal was provided to the Conservation Board by Marynette Harris as per wishes of surviving children of Lee Ivy and Willie Roberts. Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation acquired the property, and held it while the Conservation Board sought grants and donations. Major funding was secured from: REAP, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Iowa Pheasants Forever State Council; Buchanan, Linn, Clayton, Delaware, and Black Hawk County Chapters of Pheasants Forever; Wild Turkey Federation, Whitetails Unlimited, Tri-Rivers Waterfowlers, and Buchanan County Wildlife Association. The Conservation Board purchased the property from INHF on March 22, 2018.
- C. Managed to protect and enhance forest, savannah, river, and wetland habitats, and for public hunting, fishing, and nature appreciation.
- D. Trees were planted in the 6-acre area savannah management area. Regrowth was controlled with herbicide in late spring. Trails were maintained. Nest boxes were monitored. Education programs were held.



*A bluebird flies off from a branch above a nest box at Roberts Wildlife Area. More than a hundred bluebird and wood duck nest boxes are placed and monitored throughout the Conservation Board’s park system.*

**Board Meeting Highlights**

With the exception of the December meeting (held at Bill’s Restaurant in Independence), all Conservation Board meetings were held in the Board Meeting Room of the Fontana Interpretive Nature Center. Board meetings were tentatively scheduled for 6 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month, unless a conflict occurred that required a change in meeting date. All meetings were posted and open to the public.

The following are brief meeting highlights/motions from the Conservation Board’s 12 regular meetings and three special meetings.

**July 16, 2019**

The Board reviewed plans for Iron Bridge Access and agreed to use Rosetta stone for two retaining walls. The resignation of Conservation Technician Steve Sauer and plan for hiring a replacement was accepted. The Board approved replacement of an air conditioning unit at Jakway Forest.

**August 19, 2019**

The Director informed the Board toward the building shell at the recently acquired East Entrance to Fontana Park, and discussed plans for converting the structure into a rental cabin. The Board denied a request from a neighbor to the Troy Mills Access wildlife area to dig a drainage ditch through the property, and offered other suggestions for



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addressing his water issues. The Board took action to have a person who had cleared vegetation on County land without permission to cease and clean up unearthed debris. The Board approved the Director's hiring of James Mount as a Conservation Technician. The Director informed the Board that a request for FEMA mitigation funds was approved to be used to replace a granular stairway with concrete steps for access to Otter Creek from the Main Shelter at Fontana Park. Mitigation also will cover repairs riprap for the west spillway. The Director presented a plan to partner with Iowa DNR and USF&WS to do additional work at Littleton Dam. The Board approved proceeding with the plan if the partners provide the funding. The Board accepted a letter of resignation from Board member Karen Stephenson - effective December 31, 2019.

### **August 27, 2019 - Special Meeting**

A special meeting was held for Board Members to view the Iron Bridge Access site and possibly approve additional work. The urgency of the meeting was to make decisions while construction workers were still on site. Assistant County Engineer Alex Davis was available to answer questions. The Board approved additional paved trail to extend from the river accesses to additional parking areas at the Guy Grover Timber and Tree Plantings.

### **September 16, 2019**

Neighboring family members to Cortright Wildlife Area communicate instances of people shooting within 200 yards of their buildings, which is illegal. Potential solutions were discussed and the Director stated plans to place additional signs. The Board approved a park rangers Ride Along Policy for those considering careers in law enforcement. The Director informed the Board of a decision by the Board of Supervisors to start the process for selecting Conservation Board Member appointments earlier in the year, as per the Board's request.

### **September 25, 2019 - Special Meeting**

The Board discussed an offer from a neighboring landowner to sell 16 acres. The urgency for the special meeting was as per a request by the seller for the Board to provide a quick answer. The Board approved a counter-offer (ultimately was not accepted).

### **October 15, 2019**

The Board approved placement of a personal lock on a gate at Guy Grover Timber and Tree Plantings to provide access by a disabled hunter. A broader policy on vehicle access by disabled individuals was discussed. The Director informed the Board about a Board of Supervisors decision to allow Secondary Roads to install culverts and develop parking along the east side of Nolen Avenue at the Guy Grover Timber and Tree Plantings. This parking will connect via a paved trail to the improved Iron Bridge Access.



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### **November 19, 2019**

The Director informed the Board that work at Iron Bridge Access had paused due to weather, and likely wouldn't proceed again until spring. The Board approved purchase of 16 acres adjacent to Fontana Park, with final terms to be negotiated by the Director. The FY2019 Annual Report was approved. The Board conducted its annual Executive Director evaluation. The FY21 salary policy was approved.

### **December 18, 2019**

The Director informed the Board of closing date and final details for the addition of land to Fontana Park. Decisions for improvements on the Addition will be decided following some intense strategic planning. The Board declined an offer from an individual selling landlocked property near the Wapsipinicon River. Plans to replace the roof on the historic Richardson-Jakway House were approved, with funding from the Richardson-Jakway Foundation and Friends of Fontana Park. The Director informed the Board that the Board of Supervisors appointed Mary Jean Blaisdell to fill the remainder of Karen Stephenson's term. The Board commended Stephenson for her years of service and presented her with a recognition plaque.

### **December 19, 2018 - Organizational Meeting**

The meeting was held to approve FY21 and calendar year 2021 items. The Board approved its FY21 Budget and its 2021 Meetings Calendar, Board Officers, and committee appointments.

### **January 21, 2020 - Strategic Planning**

The Board scheduled this larger chunk of time for strategic planning. Most of the discussion revolved around the need for a strategic Infrastructure/Master Plan for Fontana Park, especially in light of the 16 acres recently acquired along the northeast corner. The Director also shared thoughts gathered during a staff meeting held prior to this meeting. The Board reviewed many surveys and reports that shed light on public use and demand for parks and natural areas, as well as past strategic planning exercises of the Board.

### **January 21, 2020**

The Board delved into comments from the morning strategic planning and draft Infrastructure Plans. An assignment was given for Board members to do some project prioritization, and prepare to begin work soon with a consultant group on a Master Plan. .

### **February 18, 2020**

The Director provided the Board with information about land of conservation value currently for sale. The Board approved allowing a vendor to sell products during a potential wine tasting event. Purchase of 15 kayaks and a trailer was approved, with funds provided by Friends of Fontana Park. The Board participated in a prioritization activity as part of strategic infrastructure planning.



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**April 2, 2020 (via teleconference)**

State and county-issued stay-at-home orders related to the COVID-19 Pandemic led to postponement of the regular March meeting to April 2. The Director updated the Board on county-wide pandemic directives. The Board approved closing all facilities through April and adopting County Board of Supervisors pandemic policies regarding staff. The Board directed the Director to work with a landowner adjacent to Koutny Pond and Benton County Conservation Board to acquire a couple acres to join to conservation areas together.

**April 21, 2020 (via teleconference)**

The Board reviewed a proposal from Shive-Hattery Engineering for consultant work on a Fontana Park Master Plan, and desires moving forward after updating the Board of Supervisors about the agreement and planning process. The Board approved spending additional funds as requested by contractors at iron Bridge access due to expansion of their scope of work. Eleven rules were approved for changes for county rules and regulations and ordinance updates.

**May 6, 2020 - Special Meeting (via teleconference)**

The meeting was held to due to an urgent need for updating pandemic-related policies. The Board indefinitely postponed in-person education programs. The Board moved to continue with hiring of a seasonal naturalist intern. The Board decided to keep facilities closed through May.

**May 19, 2020 (via teleconference)**

The Board reviewed a draft of the engineering specifications for stairway and spillway repairs and updates as prepared by Assistant County Engineer Alex Davis, and approved soliciting sealed bids for the work. The Board reviewed and approved a Phase 1 Plan for reopening some facilities and providing some education programs. An offer of donation of 1.5 acres of land near Otter Creek Roadside Park was accepted. An offer of donation of 13 acres of landlocked property was declined. The Board approved the Services Agreement with Shive-Hattery for development of the Fontana Park Master Plan.

**June 16, 2020 (via teleconference)**

The Board approved acceptance of a bid from Tschiggfrie Excavating for work on steps and spillway at Fontana Park. The Board reviewed and approved an updated Phase 2 pandemic reopening plan for facilities and education programs. The Board was notified of an impending retirement of Office Manager Elaine Walker, and approved that the Director begin the process to replace Walker. The Board approved a contract to have Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments conduct the 2020 Needs Assessment Survey of county residents.

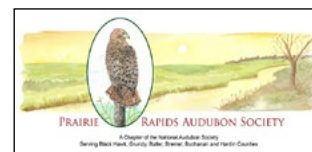


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# Cooperative Programs and Agreements

The following represents some important partnerships during the year.

- Worked with Pheasants Forever (PF) to encourage the planting of native grasses, trees, and shrubs on private land.
- Participated in local committees related to conservation and recreation, including the Trails Association, Sustainable Independence, ICSD Landscape Committee, Friends of Fontana Park, REAP, and Buchanan County Tourism.
- Communicated closely with the County Board of Supervisors.
- Worked with the Friends of Fontana Park and Richardson-Jakway Foundation as partner groups for funding Conservation Board projects.
- Partnered with County Conservation Boards during 5th grade field days.
- Shared expert advice with DNR, Watershed Management Authorities, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and others in development of wildlife habitat, environmental protection, conservation practices, and specific projects.
- Partnered with Buchanan County ISU Extension for administering environmental education programs, such as the 5th Grade Field Day, Master Conservationist, and Farm Safety Day.
- Worked with the Four Seasons Trail Association and Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) to plan future trails.
- Supported efforts of Black Hawk County Conservation Board to work on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, which traverses southwest Buchanan County.
- Worked with groups and associations to improve support for REAP and the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.
- Received substantial grant awards/funding from the following groups and programs: Water Recreation Access Cost-share; Prairie Rapids Audubon Society, Buchanan County Community Foundation, Wellmark Foundation; Black Hawk County Gaming Association; Friends of Fontana Park (and its many donors), Buchanan County Pheasants Forever, Orlan Snyder Trust, and Richardson-Jakway Foundation.
- Provided meeting space and advertised programs for the Fontana Herb Society.
- Partnered with groups to promote eagle and osprey nest monitoring, sandhill crane sightings, monarch tagging and larvae monitoring, frog and toad surveys, and other wildlife surveys.
- The Director served on statewide ISAC Legislative and CoSTAR Committees, Bird Friendly Iowa Board; and on County committees of Buchanan County Four Seasons Trails Association, Pheasants Forever, and Safety Committee.
- Staff served on county Wellness and Web Site Committees.
- The Director served as a presenter at the Iowa Association of County Conservation Board Employees (IACCBE) Conference.
- The Mountain Bike group mowed and maintained grounds at Three Elms Park as part of the Trails Association.
- The Independence Senior Center Meal Site folded and taped the newsletter.
- Partnered with Iowa County Conservation System (ICCS) on website items.
- The Director partnered with Iowa's Water and Land Legacy, ICCS, and ISAC to provide education to lawmakers, county officials, and the public regarding the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust. The Buchanan County Board of Supervisors (and the BoS Statewide Association) joined efforts to promote the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.
- The Conservation Board worked with, shared resources with, assisted, or received assistance from many of the other County departments, including Secondary Roads, County Attorney, Board of Supervisors, IT, and GIS.
- Kept in contact with local legislators - Senator Craig Johnson and Representative Bruce Bearinger.



**Appendix A: Status of Funds**

**A.1 FY20 Revenue, Reserves, and Grants**

0001-1-22-6110-520000	Camping: Fontana \$22,087.47 Jakway \$5,611; Lime Creek \$2,350	\$30,048.47
0001-1-22-6110-523000	Shelter Reservations	\$1,575.48
0001-1-22-6110-622000	Firewood Sales	\$1,720.00
0001-1-22-6110-843000	Insurance Reimbursement	\$1,093.00
0001-2-22-6110-289002	Community Found. Grant	\$22,000.00
0001-4-22-6110-612000	Rent of Equipment & Machinery	\$9,028.23
0001-4-22-6110-846000	Fuel Tax Refund	\$1,143.47
0001-4-22-6110-847000	Misc Reimb.	\$127.40
0001-1-22-6110-831000	Livestock Sale	\$750.00
0001-2-22-6110-271500	Conservation State Grant	\$266,145.00
0001-2-22-6110-810004	Local Grants	\$108,430.00
0023-3-10-6110-242100	REAP	\$12,378.00
0023-4-10-6110-600000	Interest on REAP	\$2,032.91
0027-3-22-6110-242200	State Grants	\$67,109.47
0027-4-22-0210-810000	Donations	\$19,037.12
0027-4-22-6110-523100	Reimb. Private Source - Cabins	\$14,433.97
0027-4-22-6110-600000	Interest on Conservation Reserve	\$7,551.55
0027-4-22-6110-811000	Reimb from Private Source	\$30.73
0027-4-22-6110-920000	Conservation Reserve - Sale of assets	\$20,235.25

Reserve Accounts	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>Transfers</u>	<u>Balance</u>
REAP	\$99,952.16	\$14,410.91	\$9,625.00	0	\$104,738.07
Cons. Reserve	\$284,779.24	\$128,475.69	\$14,320.47	\$9,651.00	\$408,585.46

**Competitive Grants:**

<u>Grant Program</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Iowa Water Recreation Access Cost-share	Iron Bridge Access Upgrades	\$266,345.00
Wellmark Foundation	Iron Bridge Access Upgrades	\$ 73,715.00
Black Hawk County Gaming Association	Iron Bridge Access Upgrades	\$ 34,715.00
Buchanan County Community Foundation	Iron Bridge Access Upgrades	\$ 10,000.00
Buchanan County Community Foundation	Fontana Park Steps and Spillway	\$ 12,000.00
Prairie Rapids Audubon	Kayak purchase	\$ 1,000.00

\* Received through Friends of Fontana Park

**A.2 Camping Revenue FY20** **Total Camping Revenue: \$30,048.47** (29,371 FY19)

**Fontana Camping Receipts**

Total # of People	1,717
Total Camping Units	554
Total Electrical Received	\$20,494
Total Primitive Received	\$1,593
Total Camping Revenue	<b>\$22,087</b> (20,696 FY19)

**Lime Creek Camping Receipts**

Total # of People	228
Total Camping Units	66
Total Electrical Received	\$2,057
Total Primitive Received	\$293
Total Camping Revenue	<b>\$2,350</b> (2,201 FY19)

**Jakway Camping Receipts**

Total # of People	451
Total Camping Units	134
Total Electrical Received	\$5,356
Total Primitive Received	\$255
Total Camping Revenue	<b>\$5,611</b> (6,474 FY19)

*COVID-19 kept facilities mostly closed from mid-March through May.*

**A.3 Expenditures and Balances - FY20**

**Land Acquisition and Development**

0001-22-0210-000-60000	Land	\$366,556.97
	Total Land	<u>\$398,430.00</u>
	Remaining Balance	\$31,873.03

**Administrative**

0001-22-6100-000-10004	Salary	\$63,914.98
0002-22-6100-000-11000	FICA r	\$4,698.42
0002-22-6100-000-11100	IPERS	\$6,040.82
0002-22-6100-000-11300	Health Insurance	\$12,168.75
0002-22-6100-000-11301	Life Insurance	\$62.07
0002-22-6100-000-11302	Dental Insurance	\$240.52
0002-22-6100-000-11303	Flex Fee	\$54.00
0001-22-6100-000-26000	Office Supplies	\$223.00
0001-22-6100-000-26700	Educational Supplies	\$1,646.37
0001-22-6100-000-26702	BCCF Grant	\$10,000.00
0001-22-6100-000-29400	Uniforms	905.60
0001-22-6100-000-40200	Printing & Advertising Services	1,116.41
0001-22-6100-000-41200	Postage & Mailing	\$25.00
0001-22-6100-000-41320	Mileage & Subsistence	\$242.37
0001-22-6100-000-41321	Mileage & Subsistence	\$1,747.03
0001-22-6100-000-41400	Telephone	\$4,228.67
0001-22-6100-000-41800	Internet Service	\$1,215.02
0001-22-6100-000-42220	School of Instruction	\$891.26
0001-22-6100-000-42221	School of Instruction	\$1,040.00
0001-22-6100-000-42500	Legal & Court Related	\$2,476.55
0001-22-6100-000-44400	Service Contract	\$187.98
0001-22-6100-000-45300	Leased Office Equipment	\$911.43
0002-22-6100-000-46200	Real Property Insurance	\$7,176.00
0001-22-6100-000-46300	Vehicles & Equipment Insurance	\$2,173.40
0001-22-6100-000-46400	Workmen's Compensation Ins	\$3,780.00
0001-22-6100-000-48000	Dues & Membership	\$2,175.00
0001-22-6100-000-63600	Office Equipment & Furniture	\$1,371.48
	Total Administrative	\$130,712.13
	Total Budgeted	\$138,631.00
	Remaining Balance	\$7,918.87

**A.3 Financial Report FY20 – Expenditures and Balances** (continued from page 32)

Maintenance and Operations		
0001-22-6110-000-10000	Salaries - Full Time	\$247,991.34
0001-22-6110-101-10101	Salaries - Part time	30,639.47
0002-22-6110-000-11000	FICA	\$20,236.07
0002-22-6110-000-11100	IPERS	\$25,244.41
0002-22-6110-000-11300	Health Insurance	122,932.88
0002-22-6110-000-11301	Life Insurance	\$360.23
0002-22-6110-000-11302	Dental Insurance	\$1,389.48
0002-22-6110-000-11303	Flex Fee	\$243.00
0001-22-6110-000-20101	Animal Display	\$2,025.48
0001-22-6110-000-20200	Chemicals - Herbicides	\$757.23
0001-22-6110-000-20700	Plantings	\$2,323.41
0001-22-6110-000-21201	Road Rock - Fontana	\$566.54
0001-22-6110-000-21202	Road Rock - Jakway	\$138.08
0001-22-6110-000-21203	Road Rock - other parks	\$1,052.97
0001-22-6110-000-21400	Signs	\$2,104.32
0001-22-6110-000-21901	Construction Maint. - Fontana	\$2,802.96
0001-22-6110-000-21902	Construction Maint. - Jakway	\$98.18
0001-22-6110-000-21903	Construction Maint. - other parks	\$6,970.28
0001-22-6110-000-23200	Janitorial Supplies	\$4,169.34
0001-22-6110-000-23300	Propane & Fuel Oil - Fontana	\$2,745.00
0001-22-6110-000-25000	Fuel	\$10,429.97
0001-22-6110-000-25200	Safety Items	\$512.74
0001-22-6110-000-29000	Minor Equipment & Hand Tools	\$1,011.29
0001-22-6110-000-40000	Official Publications/Legal	\$44.60
0001-22-6110-000-41101	Bldg Repair & Maint - RH Fontana	\$40.41
0001-22-6110-000-41102	Bldg Repair & Maint - RH Jakway	\$462.36
0001-22-6110-000-41300	Mileage & Sub-Employees	\$328.96
0001-22-6110-000-42200	School of Instruction	\$1,287.00
0001-22-6110-000-42801	Employee Hearing Tests	\$67.00
0001-22-6110-000-43101	Electricity - Fontana	\$12,510.61
0001-22-6110-000-43102	Electricity - Jakway	\$2,620.01
0001-22-6110-000-43103	Electricity - other parks	\$1,394.90
0001-22-6110-000-43201	Rural Water - Fontana	\$3,212.94
0001-22-6110-000-43202	Rural Water - Jakway	\$1,168.52
0001-22-6110-000-43300	Garbage	\$1,619.73
0001-22-6110-000-44000	Motor Vehicle Equip. Main.	\$1,915.49
0001-22-6110-000-44101	Janitorial & Bldg Maint. - Fontana	\$1,327.75
0001-22-6110-000-44102	Janitorial & Bldg Maint. - Jakway	\$100.52
0001-22-6110-000-44300	Equipment Repair & Maint.	\$4,441.45
0001-22-6110-000-44501	Plumbing Repair.-.Fontana	\$1,331.55
0001-22-6110-000-44502	Plumbing Repair.-.Jakway	\$56.84
0001-22-6110-000-44600	Repair & Maint. Radio Equi.	\$36.25
0001-22-6110-000-48400	Refund	\$486.00
0001-22-6110-000-61200	Heating Equipment - Asset	\$2,490.00
0001-22-6110-000-12400	Volunteer Program	\$123.50
	Total Maintenance and Operations	\$523,811.06
	Total Budgeted	\$580,643.00
	Remaining Balance	\$56,831.94

**Appendix B: FY20 Donations (Conservation Board and/or Friends of Fontana Park)**

General Donations

Izaak Walton League  
 Joe & Judy Olsen  
 Ardith Graf  
 Iowa Association of Naturalists  
 Lions Club, Independence  
 G.L.Humes  
 Warren “Rick” & Joyce Trotter  
 David & Anabeth Voigts  
 Duane & Barbara Blount  
 Marcella West  
 Dortha Sundquist  
 Grace United Methodist Church,  
 Oelwein  
 Paul Graff  
 Yvonne Brown  
 Anthony Taffola  
 Maynard Savings Bank, Hazleton  
 Verna Kerns  
 3rd Grade- Edward Elementary  
 Pat Hare  
 Orlan Snyder Trust  
 Buchanan County Pheasant Forever  
 Chautauqua Literary Club  
 Bank Iowa, Independence  
 Rick & Julie Whittle  
 Nancy Vetsey  
 Charles & Rosemary Krebs  
 Mary K. Fish

Memorials (as recognized)

Cindy Parker  
 Robert Streitmatter  
 Peggy Knowles  
 Jim Ridihalgh  
 Shirley Grover  
 Mary Ludholz  
 Carroll Conklin  
 Roger Johnson  
 Norm & Susan West

Animal Sponsorships

Rosie Byrd  
 Amelia Schrodemier  
 Todd Perkins  
 Kim Dakovich  
 East Elementary  
 Hazleton Commercial Club  
 Kitty Myers  
 Independence Garden Club  
 Ellyn Perkins  
 Lorelei & Don Williams  
 Millie Jessen  
 Marty Langel  
 Molly Trotter  
 Brynne Trotter  
 Marybeth Jaggard  
 Amanda Rohrig  
 Elly, Cooper, Carver, Cora &  
 Parker  
 Mary Klotzbach  
 Jacob Schmitz  
 Cat Wise  
 Margie Torgerson  
 Ben Korn  
 Susan & Norm West  
 Rosie Bird  
 Alexander Korn  
 Bob Cashner  
 Quasqueton Garden Club  
 Parker Kress  
 (memory of Luke Kress)  
 Penny Noah  
 Dean & Deb Weis  
 JD Schmitz  
 Luke & Anna Stephens  
 Sue Johnson  
 Owen Kress  
 (memory of Luke Kress)  
 Andrew Schrodemier  
 Hayden Schmitz  
 Elaine Hughes  
 Maxine Losen  
 Keegan Slick

Donated Items & Services

Loren Hamilton - bench  
 construction  
 Spahn & Rose - lumber  
 Jerry Barker & Jan Handler-  
 four framed prints  
 Suzie Robinson -  
 log cabin bird house  
 David Voigts - nest box repairs



*Dickcissel on compass plant at Ham Marsh*



*Thanks to all anonymous donors who gave feed for display animals and reusable items for environmental education classes!*



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## Appendix C: Environmental Education

### Appendix C.1: Environmental Education Attendance Figures FY20

The following is a summary of the groups served through the EE program. The EE program is designed to meet a set of specific goals and objectives, described in the Buchanan County Conservation Board's Long-term Plan. Figures for FY19 and FY18 are shown in parenthesis.

<u>School Student Programs (K-college)</u>			<u>Youth Programs (other than school groups)</u>		
Number of presentations:	601	(647) (743)	Number of presentations:	51	(78) (93)
Total attendance:	10,419	(13,116) (13,857)	Total attendance:	904	(1,644) (1,825)
Average group size:	17.3	(20.3) (18.7)	Average group size:	17.7	(21.1) (19.6)
 <u>Teacher and Youth Leader Programs</u>			 <u>Public Programs (advertised to public)</u>		
Number offered:	12	(18) (17)	Number of presentations:	61	(61) (51)
Total attendance:	143	(193) (205)	Total attendance:	1,153	(1,391) (1,969)
Average group size:	11.9	(12.1) (9.5)	Average group size:	18.9	(38.6) (31.1)
 <u>Civic and Senior Programs</u>			 <u>Total Attendance</u>		
Number of presentations:	39	(62) (46)	Presentations:	764	(867) (950)
Total attendance:	1223	(1,090) (924)	Total:	13,842	(17,434) (18,780)
Average group size:	31.4	(17.6) (20)	Avg. Group Size:	18.1	(20.2) (19.8)

Outdoor programming: 53.4% of programs were primarily conducted outdoors.

### Appendix C.2: Programming Support - FY20

Vic Collins, Beekeeper	Chad Kehrli, Iowa DNR	Terry VanDeWalle
Roxanne Fuller, ISU Extension	Mark Leosche, Iowa DNR	Tom Schilke,
Melanie Weber, ISU Extension	Amber Sauser, Iowa DNR	Prairie Rapids Audubon Society
Sarah Kielly, ISU Extension	Katie Klus, Black Hawk CCB*	Mike Thompkins,
Jen Dillon, Jesup FFA	Katy Cantin, Black Hawk CCB*	Prairie Rapids Audubon Society
David Voigts, Astronomer	Scott Bahman, Benton CCB*	Wanda Havercamp
Darrin Siefken, Crawdaddy Outdoors	Signey Hilby, Benton CCB*	
Fontana Herb Society	Aaron Askelson, Benton CCB*	
Dave Harms, Wapsi Bowhunters	Heather Gamm, Bremer CCB*	
Steve McGraw, Wapsi Bowhunters	Matt Crayne, Chickasaw CCB*	
Andy Crump, Wapsie River Rentals	Kenny Slocum, Clayton CCB*	
Kip Ladage, Ladage Photography	Dawn Amundson, Fayette CCB*	
Jason Auel, Iowa DNR	Megan Rawlins, Independence Schools	
Dakota Drish, Iowa DNR	John Lappe, Buchanan County Wildlife Association	
Lori Eberhard, Iowa DNR	Doug Beier, Buchanan County Wildlife Association	
Katie Hund, Iowa DNR	Kristi Moeller, Buchanan County Health Center	

\* County conservation board



### Appendix C.3: Public Programs Offered - FY20 (\* Initially offered, but canceled due to COVID-19)

Animal Encounters (18)	Moonlight Snowshoe	* Volunteer Workshop
Boundary Waters Canoe Area	National Fossil Day	Wee Nature Tales Day Camp (25)
Wilderness Trip	Natural Areas Photo Contest	What? Why? When? (4)
QR Codes Trail Walk (6)	Nature Explorers Day Camp (10)	Whitewater Kayaking
* Energy Games	Nature Kids (6)	* Wildflower Walk
Family Snowshoe	New Year's Woodland Walks	Winter Day Camp (2)
* Forest Bathing	Old Time Meal at Richardson-Jakway	Young Families Canoe Float
* Geocaching Egg Hunt	Historic Site	Young Naturalists Day Camp (7)
Golden Cooler Cook-Off	Older Wiser Livelier Souls (OWLS) (7)	Talons of the Night
Harvest Centerpiece	Photography Workshop	* Antarctica: Window into Climate Change
Kayaking at Wapsie Access (2)	Pumpkin, Plunge, and Paddle	Prairie Playground Club (9)
* Master Conservationist	River Raiders	
Monarch Festival	Star Party	
Monarch Tagging (2)	Trick or Cache	

## Appendix D: FY20 Volunteers

### Campground Hosts

Mark & Kelly Clement  
Rosalie Nielsen  
Scott & Jenny Schuldt  
Roger & Deb Henderson

### Friends of Fontana Park

Loren Hamilton  
David Voigts  
Wendy Vandewalle  
Lisa Ross Thedens  
Linda Ridihaugh  
Diane Johnson  
Elaine Walker  
Sondra Cabell  
Dan Cohen  
Michael Maas  
Anita Miller  
Lorene Shonka (banquet)  
Marybeth Jaggard (banquet)  
Don Shonka (banquet)

### Richardson-Jakway Foundation

Mary and Harvey Davis  
Wanda Haverkamp  
Coralee Bodeker

### Wildlife Monitoring

Clark Willoughby  
David Voigts  
Faith Rulapugh  
Elaine Hughes  
Max Grover  
Elaine Hughes

### Gardens and Landscaping

MaryBeth Jaggard  
Mary Kalb  
Edith Biddinger  
Margaret Damge  
Bev Johnson  
Elaine Johnson  
Jo Porter  
Bev Sage  
Claudia Schweer  
Jane Walters

### Newsletter assembly

Jean Meyer  
Ronnie Gibson  
Sharon Nayla  
Barb Suwa  
Jamie Fuller  
Pearl Pat  
Beth Uthoff  
Dick O'Brian  
Becky VanSaile  
Karla Alston  
Sharla Sherretts  
Brenda Fuller  
Linda Donlea  
Evelyn McCalley  
Marjorie Ryan  
Lois Gaffney  
Eloise Baldwin  
Barb Siggelkov  
Millie Jessen  
Edith Biddinger  
Lorene Shonka  
David Voigts  
Ellen Gaffney  
Margaret Damge

### Park Maintenance

Hawkeye Community College  
students  
Upper Iowa University  
Science & Environment Club-  
Ted Good (Ham Marsh)  
Three Elms Mountain Bike Club  
part of Buchanan County  
Four Seasons Trails Association

### Nature Center Receptionists - Hours

Edith Biddinger - 35  
Ruby Bodeker - 18  
Jim Bond - 21  
Sally Bond - 21  
Joye Bowers - 10  
Margaret Damge - 13  
Ellen Gaffney - 36  
Elaine Hughes - 51  
Frankie King - 7  
Karla Kula - 8  
Bob Miede - 20  
Duane Olsen - 28  
Patti Olmstead - 4  
Faith Rulapugh - 21  
Lorene Shonka - 21  
Joe Stalsberg - 3  
David Voigts - 28  
Jane Watson - 63  
Clark Willoughby - 55

### Banquet Volunteers

Loren Hamilton  
David Voigts  
Wendy VanDeWalle  
Lisa Ross-Thedens  
Linda Ridihaugh  
Diane Johnson  
Elaine Walker  
Michael Maas  
Sondra Cabell  
Dan Cohen  
Anita Miller



— “Increasing our  
quality of life through  
programs of conservation  
and education.”

**Appendix E: Conservation Board and Board of Supervisors**

**E.1 Board Members and terms from founding to present (\*Denotes charter board member)**

Ralph L. Kimball*, Independence	1956-58	Bob Booher, Independence	1983-91
C. L. (Mickey) Fox*, Jesup	1956-67	Nyle McMartin, Jesup	1992-01
L.O. Weston*, Lamont	1956-58	Phil Thyer, Independence	1993-00
“ “ “	1962-65	Diane Slaughter, Independence	1994-03
A.J. Murphy, Winthrop	1957-62	Loren Hamilton, Independence	1995-04
R.C. Stewart*, Lamont	1956-62	“ “	2013-
H.G. Lincoln*, Rowley	1956-57	Robert Bainbridge, Independence	1996-99
Jack Gates, Independence	1958-62	Dr. Kenneth McDonough, Oelwein	2000-06
Robert Buckman, Aurora	1959-62	Roger Johnson, Independence	2001-12
“ “ “	1965-92	Richard Vogel, Jesup	2002-05
Lacey Gee, Brandon	1962-63	Gary Buresh, Independence	2004-12
Warren Pratt, Rowley	1962-63	Jim Klever, Independence	2005-14
Don Anderson, Independence	1962-81	Ranor Hoffman	2006-10
Kessler Clark, Brandon	1963-65	Patricia Fencl	2006-16
Miller McMillen, Quasqueton	1964-66	Karen Stephenson	2011-19
Raymond Finley, Brandon	1966-80	Don Shonka	2012-15
Max Grover, Rowley	1967-93	Ronnie Wolfe	2015-
J.M. Tounshendeaux, Jesup	1968-79	Andy Crump	2015-
John Miller, Jesup	1980-94	Anita Miller	2016-
Carroll Conklin, Independence	1981-95	Mary Jean Blaisdell	2020-
Harry Brooks, Independence	1982-83		

**E.2 Board of Supervisors**

The Conservation Board thrives on the support of the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors, and their understanding of the importance of local conservation programs. Members of the FY20 Board of Supervisors are shown below.

**Buchanan County Board of Supervisors, FY20**



Gary Gissel



Don Shonka



Clayton Ohrt



— “Increasing our quality of life through programs of conservation and education.”

# Appendix F: Map of Buchanan County Areas

1. Anderson Addition to Cutshall
2. Bearbower Sand Prairie
3. Blazingstar Prairie
4. Boies Bend
5. Bryantsburg Prairie
6. Buffalo Creek Area
7. Buffalo Creek Wildlife Area
8. Cortright Wildlife Area
9. Crumbacher Wildlife Area
10. Cutshall Area
11. Fairbank Fen
12. Fontana Park
13. Frogville Area
14. Guy Grover Timber and Tree Pl.
15. Ham Marsh
16. Hodges and North Wildlife Area
17. Hoover Area
18. Iron Bridge Woodland and Access
19. Jakway Forest
20. Koutny Pond/Hoffman Woods
21. Lime Creek Area
22. Mickey Fox Area
23. Newton Township Wildlife Area
24. Nibeck Preserve
25. Otter Creek Wildlife Area
26. Otter Creek Roadside Park
27. Patton Prairie
28. Pine Creek Area
29. Putty Root Preserve
30. Quigley-Slattery Heritage Prairie
31. Robert "Chic" McGlaulin Easement
32. Roberts Wildlife Area
33. Rowley Fen
34. Sand Creek Area
35. Schneider-Heinick-Rowe Area
36. Swartz Preserve
37. Three Elms Area
38. Troy Mills Access
39. Van Lanningham Area
40. Wapsi River Access
41. Welner Woods

