

PLAN PARTICIPANTS

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And,

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Assisted by:

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Clayton County Conservation Board is to promote the health and general welfare of the people, and to encourage preservation, conservation, education and recreation through responsible use and appreciation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.

In 1955, the 56th General Assembly passed the County Conservation Law, Chapter 111A, now Chapter 350, of the Code of Iowa, which made it possible for county residents to establish their own resource management agencies.

Purpose: Chapter 350 of the Code of Iowa establishes the specific purposes of the program which include:

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

PREFACE

The Clayton County Conservation Board (“the Board”) entered into this planning process with one specific outcome in mind: to do preemptive planning rather than react to situations.

The Conservation Board is unique in county government. Unlike other departments, the Board is often approached by landowners who either want to give or sell their land to the Board. While it welcomes those opportunities, the Board recognizes that funds may not be available to purchase and maintain conservation land and that public ownership will remove land from the tax rolls.

The Strategic Plan may have a useful life of five years or less, and should be updated when necessary, especially when Board members or other situations change. It should be referred to often, particularly during budget review.

To understand the goals and eventual outcomes of this plan you must first understand the planning process. The Clayton County Conservation Board work on the plan was guided by a set of core values, which the Board developed to help define the overall goals and objectives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Plan is an on going effort by the Clayton County Conservation Board to plan for the immediate and long-term future. The plan is intended to be used to help guide the Board in making decisions and to justify the basis of those decisions.

To help guide the Board in their decisions, some core values were established. The values provide the starting point for the plan. The core values are as follows:

- It is of utmost importance to preserve the land.
- A high priority must be placed on conservation education.
- Remnants of past ecosystems must be preserved.
- We must foster a citizenship with the natural community.
- The development and promotion of natural recreational opportunities are a high priority.
- Our activities should focus on nature.

The general public has had many opportunities to participate in the process. Response to a written survey of users was very high, both in number of responses and in quality of answers. The Board has considered and included many of the users' suggestions. The Board members and the staff also evaluated their own ideas by conducting a visioning exercise and by completing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

The Board then used the input to establish the goals and objectives. The goals are generally broad and the objectives are more detailed. The goals are listed below:

- To maintain the parks, grounds, facilities, exhibits and natural areas.
- To expand and maintain the high level of environmental education services offered by the Conservation Board
- To offer conservation education and other outreach programs to develop a dialogue with farmers and other landowners on issues of land use, preservation and agriculture.
- To continue to preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and historical heritage present in Clayton County.
- Identify and develop partnerships with groups and agencies and work towards reaching similar goals.

The next sections of the plan explore tools for the Board to use for various situations. A set of Evaluation Criteria has been set up to help the Board evaluate possible acquisitions. A Parks and Facilities Plan as well as and Interpretive Programs plan have been included.

The Strategic Plan concludes with an-Appendix that gives specifics about the various data sources used in the Plan.

VALUES

We, the Clayton County Conservation Board, define **Conservation** as the wise use of natural resources. In a broader sense, it is the preservation of the natural past and the preservation of the present for future generations. It is a responsibility to the land and its people. It is an attempt to improve the relationship between the land and its people. It is an awareness that each of our actions has a natural consequence and that those consequences are not always immediately apparent.

Recognizing that land has an inherent value, in and of itself, we agree that the definition of “**the land**” will be broadened to include all natural resources such as our soil, plants, wildlife, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, ground water and air.

Our core Values:

It is of utmost importance to preserve the health of the land.

We believe that everyone has an obligation to preserve the natural resources that we are given. Without people’s attention today, these resources will be depleted or degraded for future generations.

A high priority must be placed on conservation education.

Those of us that are involved in conservation efforts must take steps to educate the general public about our natural resources and the importance of conserving them.

Remnants of past ecosystems must be preserved.

Delicately balanced ecosystems develop in nature over periods of time numbering in the hundreds or thousands of years. These same systems are often destroyed. Often, remnants of destroyed ecosystems remain as a reminder of what once was. It is important that we strive to identify, interpret and preserve all the components of these communities so that they will maintain their capacity for self-renewal.

We must foster a citizenship with the natural community.

If we are to achieve a favorable balance between people and the land, we must foster a relationship that transcends intellect. We need to instill in people feelings of respect, pride, stewardship, awe, responsibility, understanding, and harmony with and for the land.

The development and promotion of natural low impact recreational opportunities is a high priority.

If people are to develop such a relationship, they should be allowed to interact with the land. In order to promote that ability, it is important that we strive to develop recreational opportunities that encourage contact with nature and the land.

Our activities should focus on natural communities.

All of our conservation efforts will be done in such a way that they do not degrade but rather enhance the natural beauty of the land. We will focus on the interpretation of natural communities and human interaction with them.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

In developing the updated 5-Year Plan, the Board went through a standard planning process. This included reviewing the previous plan, public input surveys and staff recommendations while keeping with our mission statement and values.

On page 33 of the appendix are definitions for Environmental Education, Conservation Education, Interpretation, the Land, Natural Communities and Natural Areas. These definitions are useful when examining goals.

Below are listed the goals of the Clayton County Conservation Board. They are in no specific order, nor are the objectives.

GOAL To maintain and manage the parks, grounds, facilities, exhibits and natural areas.

Objective: To continue the level of maintenance adequate for safe public use of grounds, facilities, exhibits and natural areas.

Objective: To consider acquisition of future areas that become available and that meet the criteria for evaluating new land, facilities, exhibits and natural areas.

Objective: To manage our properties, to protect, preserve and enhance their natural communities.

- Objective: Make it possible for all residents of Clayton County to be close to a natural area.
- Objective: Publicize and promote outlying areas appropriate to the site.
- Objective: Develop county trails and, where possible, hook up to existing local, regional, state and national trails.

GOAL To expand and maintain the high level of environmental education services offered by the Conservation Board.

- Objective: Continue the in-school programs offered to children throughout the county.
- Objective: Continue the programs and services offered for youth.
- Objective: Continue to expand an adult education program.
- Objective: Expand programs to utilize county, state and private natural reserves and areas countywide. Emphasize those offering unique habitats or sites that would help the public gain appreciation and ownership of such areas near their communities.
- Objective: Encourage educators and group leaders to use conservation areas in Clayton County.
- Objective: Hire additional staff to make expansion of programs and services possible.
- Objective: Increase and expand recycling education efforts and discussion of solid waste issues.

GOAL To offer conservation education and other outreach programs to develop a dialogue with farmers and other landowners on issues of land use, preservation and agriculture.

- Objective: Start an active and ongoing inventory of lands in Clayton County.
- Objective: Preserve rare lands and habitats through easements.
- Objective: Develop programs specifically related to agriculture and how it functions as a larger biotic community, including water, soil, groundwater, wildlife, native vegetation and air.

GOAL To continue to preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and historical heritage present in Clayton County.

Objective: Support the reestablishment of the Clayton County Historical Society and work with them to achieve our similar goals.

Objective: Plan and implement proper rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction and/or preservation of present cultural sites.

Objective: Coordinate with historical societies to meet this goal.

Objective: Cooperate with other agencies to re-introduce species and their habitats that have been eliminated from Clayton County and to restore relationships among biotic communities.

GOAL Identify and develop partnerships with groups and agencies and work towards reaching similar goals.

Objective: Investigate formation of a non-profit foundation to help the Board with fundraising, public support and promotion.

GOAL To continue providing high quality visitor service information through the Iowa Welcome Center.

Objective: To be a Primary Iowa Welcome Center.

Objective: Expand Volunteer program.

Objective: Develop public meeting space/ resource library.

Objective: Provide a hard surface parking lot.

Objective: Maintain regularly scheduled public educational programs.

Objective: Provide hospitality and high quality, accurate interesting information about travel in Iowa.

Objective: Maintain one staff person as a certified Iowa Travel Counselor through IDDED.

Objective: Offer Iowa Made and nature/educational products in the gift shop.

Objective: Publicize and promote county areas through multi-media.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Board is often presented with the opportunity to purchase land or accept land donated to the Clayton County Conservation Board . With pressing budget and maintenance concerns, the Board incorporated a tool to make informed, objective decisions about new land, exhibits and facilities. Thus the Board developed a set of evaluation criteria to use in these situations.

Criteria for evaluating potentially new land, exhibits and facilities for the Clayton County Conservation Board

Criteria:

- Distribution of areas in the county
- River/ water access
- Trail potential
- Boundary problems
- Minimize inholdings
- Unique attributes
- Quality of natural resource
- Proximity to existing area
- Long-term maintenance
- Greenbelt corridor
- Connections or links to other public or private conservation areas
- Historical significance
- Mississippi access/vistas
- Potential for selected activities (not currently provided)
- Wildlife habitat
- Potential to restore biotic communities

It is the intention of the Board to use these criteria when evaluating potential new land, exhibits and facilities. For projects that rate highly by these criteria, it is the Board's intent to aggressively seek appropriate funding sources. Thus it is important that the Plan be referred to during budget formulation.

PARKS and FACILITIES PLAN

In developing this document, it also became apparent that an individual park plan was needed to identify issues. The following section deals with the issues at each of the parks and other issues the Board may face in the future.

Osborne Visitor Welcome and Nature Center, 29862 Osborne Rd, Elkader

The Osborne Center covers 300 acres, four miles south of Elkader on Highway 13. A wide range of activities take place here, like viewing the live animal exhibits, camping, archery, hiking on trails, visiting the Iowa Room, and our annual event, Heritage Days. The central theme of Osborne is education. By touring the grounds and displays, visitors can learn not only about Clayton County but the natural environment as a whole.

Future issues at Osborne include:

- Osborne Park Master Plan
 1. Equipment Upgrade, Vehicles and small equipment
 2. Welcome Center Long-term maintenance issues
 3. Maintenance/Shop yard, parking lot and foot traffic flow
 4. New Proposed Campground Area
 5. Buffalo Pen Location
- Address the third floor of Center
- Address future of the old store and residence
- Implement Osborne Park Forestry/Land Management Plan
- Address accessibility around the park for all
- Erosion control along Volga River
- Replacing aging infrastructure utilities and facilities
- Surface parking lot
- Increase off season opportunities for recreation, nature appreciation
- Increase and upgrade interpretive signs
- Possible acquisition of the home site at the south end of the park for consolidation of lands
- **Virtual Interpretation**

Lovers Leap

This 33 acre site is on the north side of Elkader.

Issues:

- Address ways to keep park from being frequented after dark
- Connect to city's trail system
- Address Invasive species on the goat prairie

Elkader Canoe Ramp, 428 Sandpit Road NE, Elkader

The site was turned over to the Conservation Board after it was built in 2007 by Ryan Helgerson as part of an Eagle Scout Project. The canoe ramp is located along the Turkey River on Quarry Road.

Issues:

- Seed area in native grasses and forbs to reduce mowing
- Provide table and trash can
- Signage for the area
- **Turkey River Water Trail access.**

Joy Springs, 37771 Alpha Ave., Strawberry Point

Joy Spring covers approximately 90 acres and is located southwest of Strawberry Point. This park seems to be underutilized and used mainly by trout-seeking anglers. The main issue is access to the park, as a fence prevents campers and picnickers from getting close to the shelter and tables. Pressure is being felt from those who like it the way it is and those who would like to use it more if more accessible.

Issues are:

- Increase the ease of access and encourage use of undeveloped land for trails and nature study
- More fire rings
- Additional shelter with a cement floor
- Stream access
- Expansion, acquisition into sand pit area for lake/ pond fishing
- Protect riparian habitat
- Improvements in the spring area
- Develop Forestry Plan

Motor Mill (23002 Grain Rd.)

Motor Mill is a historic site on the National Register of Historic Places and Located east of Elkader about seven miles. Five Buildings made of limestone quarried nearby are still present today. The Mill itself stands six full stories. Other buildings present are the cooperage, stable, inn, and icehouse. The total site covers 155 acres and has two trails and campground. At the present time, the site is broken into two parts by a missing bridge across the Turkey River. It has become a popular stop for canoeists.

Issues:

- Maintain integrity of historic features
- Preserve, maintain and restore buildings
- Replace the bridge across the Turkey River
- Access to buildings
- Expansion of grounds to include property for sale – possible wilderness area with cabins for rent or for retreats
- Habitat improvements
 - Robert Grau Memorial Savanna
 - Prairie planting South side
 - Restoration of prairie on North side
- Hunting
- Parking area for bridge
- Interpret site culturally and naturally
- Signage

- Improve access road with secondary roads department
- Continue to work with the Motor Mill Foundation of Clayton County
- Develop Forestry Plan
- Consider Recreational Feasibility Study
- Horse use on South side and monitor the impact
- Develop trail connection with Pony Hollow Trail
- **Flood Control Issues**
- **Turkey River Water Trail access**

Bloody Run, 29857 128th St., Marquette

This 135-acre park is west of Marquette and provides excellent camping and fishing. Undeveloped areas exist in the rear of the park.

Issues:

- More and better trails
- Add one more shelter in the front area
- Promote
- Campground host
- Boundary location
- Protect riparian areas
- Retain primitive nature in back section
- Replace latrine by shelter
- Add trees in front area
- Implement Forestry Plan
- Electrical Hookups in front camping area
- Cooperate with other agencies with site promotion and possible trail development

Buck Creek, 2.5 miles east of Hwy 52 at 30286 - 232 St., Garnavillo

Located three miles northeast of Garnavillo, this 103- acre site offers camping, picnicking, fishing and forested areas.

Issues:

- Possible trails
- Future spot for a cabin or cabins
- Boundary location
- Foot bridge across the stream
- Habitat improvements
- Remote campsite
- Develop Forestry Plan
- Hunting

Frieden Park, 5.5 miles northwest of Elkader at 16723 Chariot Rd.

This small park is northwest of Elkader and opposite the Turkey River from Big Springs Trout Hatchery. This park offers rough camping, canoe access and picnicking.

Issues:

- Provide better canoe access, possibly in conjunction with adjoining state property
- Address ways to keep park from being frequented after dark

- Upgrade latrine and facilities including fire rings and tables
- **Turkey River Corridor Project development**

Elkader Wetlands

This natural undeveloped area covers approximately 20 acres and is located on the east edge of Elkader.

Issues:

- Remain undeveloped for wildlife
- Possible interpretive trail to tie in with the city's and Pony Hollow
- Wetlands boardwalk
- Waterfowl structures
- Manage vegetation growth
- Signage

Pony Hollow Trail, 26184 Hwy 13, Elkader

This trail is located on the northeast edge of Elkader. It covers approximately 25 acres and is an all-weather trail used by many diverse groups.

Issues:

- Keeping all users happy (horses, snowmobiles, cross-country skiers, hikers) or need of parallel trails
- Develop trail connection with Motor Mill
- Trailhead development
- Loop trail into Elkader
- Promote and publicize trail
- Develop brochure
- **Turkey River Corridor Project development**

Turkey River Park, 20195 Strawberry Point Rd., Elkader

This park offers picnicking, fishing and canoe access and is also part of the trail system that connects Pony Hollow to the City of Elkader. It is located on the south edge of Elkader.

Issues:

- Improve canoe access
- Replace water pump/City Water
- **Turkey River Water Trail development**

Frenchtown Park, 26254 Mississippi Rd, Guttenberg

This site is three miles north of Guttenberg and provides boat access to the Mississippi River.

Issues:

- Possible interpretive trail into the wetlands and better access to the river
- Camping
- Address restroom (providing portable toilet)
- Native Trees

Volga White Pine Preserve, 28807 Buchanan St., Volga

This preserve is located on the north edge of Volga and occupies approximately 22 acres.

Issues:

- Public access
- Sign
- Forest Research Project

Kleve Fen

Located 4 miles south of Postville on Aspen Ave. The 28-acre preserve is part of one of the largest fen complexes in the state.

- Maintain natural integrity of the fen
- Create an Oak-Prairie Savanna in the timber.
- The Pond
- Access issue
- Plant inventory
- Alien Species
- Develop Management Plan
- Develop baseline biotic/abiotic survey
 - pH
 - pesticides
 - Iowater
 - nutrients

Chicken Ridge Scenic Overlook, 19861 Chicken Ridge Rd., Elkader

Located four miles south of Elkader on Hwy 13, this overlook provides a view of what seems like the entire county. Much can be told about Clayton County from this park.

Issues:

- Provide interpretation of view (geology) through a historical marker or signage
- Improve picnicking
- Possible small shelter
- Prairie Planting
- Signage

Mederville Canoe Access

This canoe and fishing access on the Volga River is well used.

Issues:

- Improve trail to the Volga river

Stone Pine Plantation

This two- acre area is four miles north of Strawberry Point and is undeveloped.

Issues:

- Possibly offer to Ewalu

Osterdock Canoe Access

This access is located on the Turkey River at Osterdock.

Issues:

- Should we maintain as is
- Better access to river
- Repair and improve landing
- **Turkey River Water Trail development**

Future Considerations for the Board

- Millville (Becker Property) – if presented with the opportunity, what will the board do (Management Plan – 2002)
- Retreat Center – does the Board want to develop such an attraction and where would it be located
- Canoe trail from Fayette County to Mississippi River- developing a guide with canoe access and camping sites highlighted
- **Clayton County Trail planning & development**
- **Work with regional partners to develop Regional Trail Plan and implementation**

| Parks | Nature Center | Nature Trails | Canoe Access | Picnic Shelters | Picnic Areas | Parking Areas | Wildlife Exhibits | Playground Equipment | Archery | Camping Areas | Heritage and Historical Buildings | Interpretive Signs | Utilities(water/sewer) | Equestrian Use | Fire Rings | Fishing Access |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Osborne Center | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | T/M | | X | X |
| Joy Springs | | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | | | T/M | | X | X | X |
| Motor Mill | | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | | | T/M | | X | X | X |
| Bloody Run | | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | | | T/M | | X | X | X |
| Buck Creek | | X | | X | X | X | | | X | | | L | | X | X | X |
| Frieden Park | | | | X | X | X | | | X | | | L | | X | X | X |
| Lovers Leap | | X | | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Elkader Wetlands | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pony Hollow | | X | | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | X | X |
| Turkey River | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | X | X | X |
| Frenchtown | | | X | X | X | X | | X | | | | | | X | X | X |
| Volga Pine Preserve | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chicken Ridge | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mederville Access | | | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Stone Pine Plantation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Osterdock Access | | | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Becker Property | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Klieve Property | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Parks | | Osborne Center | Joy Springs | Motor Mill | Bloody Run | Buck Creek | Frieden Park | Lovers Leap | Elkader Wetlands | Pony Hollow | Turkey River | Frenchtown | Volga Pine Preserve | Chicken Ridge | Mederville Access | Stone Pine Plantation | Osterdock Access | Becker Property | Kleve Property |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Nature Center | | | X | | X | X | | | X | X | | X | | | | | | X | |
| Nature Trails | | X | | X | X | | X | | | | X | X | | X | | | | X | |
| Canoe Access | | X | | X | X | | | | | X | X | X | | X | | | | X | |
| Picnic Shelters | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | | X | |
| Picnic Areas | | X | X | X | X | | | | | X | | X | | X | | | X | X | X |
| Parking Areas | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wildlife Exhibits | | X | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Playground Equipment | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Tree Rings | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Camping Areas | | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Heritage and Historical Buildings | | X | | X | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | | | X | X |
| Shop or Storage Areas | | X | | X | | X | | | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | X | X |
| Directional or Identification Signs | | X | X | X | X | X | L | | X | | TWL | X | X | X | X | | | X | X |
| Interpretive Signs | | X | TWL | X | L | L | L | | | | TWL | | | | | | | TWL | X |
| Utilities(water/sewer) | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Handicap Access | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | | | | X | X |
| Vandalism Prevention | | X | | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X |
| Linked Hunting | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Archery | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cabins | | X | X | X | | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | X | |
| Equestrian Use | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

School Field Trip Programs

Trail Walks

Nature Trail
Conifer Trail
Land Use/ Soil Conservation trail
Exercise Trail

Popular Tours

Live Animal Exhibit and Nature Center
Pioneer Village

Testing the Waters

Pond Critters
Water Quality

Predator- Prey Activities

Nature Scavenger Hunts

Activities suited for school campouts

Fishing
Archery (grades 5 and up)
Wild Edibles
Night Hikes

Art Activities

Leaf Critters
Walnut Owls
Track Detectives
Radical Reptiles

Additional Activities

Orienteering (grades 4-6)
Tree Identification (grades 3 and up)
Water Issues (Stream table)

Sensory Activity

Adopt – A – Tree

2002-2003 Classroom Naturalist Programs

Popular Hands-On Programs

1. Winter Birds
2. Nature's Music
3. Hoo Gives a Hoot?
4. Rainforest Legends
5. Beaverology
6. Scaly and Slimy
7. Fins, Furs, Feathers
8. Incredible Insects
9. Trees are Terrific
10. Snow Detectives
11. Meet the Mammals
12. Indian Tales
13. What Tree is This?
14. Creature Feature

Slide Shows

1. Nature's Webs
2. Old Growth Forests
3. Wading Into Wetlands
4. Earth Day Every Day
5. Predators: A Part of the Picture
6. Survival of the Fittest
7. Iowa Mammals
8. Soil: We Can't Grow Without It
9. Iowa's Endangered Species
10. Rainforests: Save Their Layers of Life
11. Tropical Feast

- 15. Geology Rocks
- 16. Diggin' Up Fossils
- 17. Water Works

- 18. Star Clocks
- 19. The Mitten
- 20. Incredible Journey

JUNIOR NATURALIST PROGRAM - 2002
(Summer Campout Activities)

6th Grade - Nature Explorers

- A River Runs Through It (Stream Table)
- Hook, Line, and Sinker
- Pond Investigation
- Keeping Track of Nature (Nature Journaling)
- Bird Brained
- Owl Study

7th Grade - Trackers

- Track Detectives
- Wading Into Wetlands
- Migration Headache
- Forests Are More Than Trees
- Prairie Prowl
- A River Runs Through It (Stream Table)
- Unnature Trail
- Wildlife Management

8th Grade - Survivors

- Survival Kit
- Stranded in the Himalayas
- Wild Edible (plant and insect)
- Orienteering
- Taking Cover
- And Then There Were None (Endangered Species)
- Race For Your Life
- Build A Place To Nest and They Will Do The Rest (BB Boxes)

All Groups

- Archery
- Canoeing/Water Safety
- Night Hike
- River Tubing
- New Games

Other Activities

- Pond Study
- Land Use and Soil Conservation
- What Would You Do? (Environmental Ethics)
- Water Quality Investigation
- Endangered Species

How Many Bears?
Forest Management
Bald Eagle Refuge

Events

Fishing Clinic
Women In The Outdoors
Heritage Days
Holiday Walk
Bald Eagle Days
Journey Back In Time – Country Heritage Foundation
Hawk Watch Weekend
Halloween Hike – Backbone State Park
DARE Program - Elkader

Public Programs

Guest Speakers on various nature/history related topics
Care Centers
Public Libraries
Church groups
Organizations
Boy Scout Groups
Hunter Education

Presentations Available for Adult Groups

Slide Programs:

1. Predators: Part of the Picture
2. Soil: We Can't Grow Without It
3. Water: We Can't Live Without It
4. Iowa's Endangered Species
5. Forests are More Than Trees
6. Spring and Summer Wildflowers
7. Let's Clear the Air
8. Motor Mill
9. Earth Day, Every Day
10. Where the Buffalo Roamed
11. Rainforests: The Iowa Connection

Other Naturalist Programs:

1. Hoo Gives a Hoot
2. Birds of Prey
3. Scaly and slimy
4. Creature Feature
5. Winter Birds
6. Backyard Wildlife

Other Presentations Include:

1. Bluebirds
2. Spring Wildflowers Hike
3. Wild Edible Plants
4. Nature Photography
5. Bald Eagles
6. Motor Open House
7. Fen Walk
8. Heritage Days
9. Holiday Walk
10. Women in Outdoors

APPENDIX

| | |
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| A. | Resources |
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| C. | Visioning |
| D. | User Survey Responses |
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| F. | References |

RESOURCES

The Clayton County Conservation Board recognizes its responsibility to conserve the county's rich natural resources, not only for current and future residents of the area but as an ecosystem of special significance. Scenic vistas and bluffs along the Mississippi River and tributary valleys attract many visitors and form the basis for a major tourism industry.

To be able to plan for the future, you have to know where you have been. That is why background information about human and natural resources is essential to the planning process. Below, we have outlined the history of Clayton County, as well as provide statistical information that will provide a basis for the findings of this plan.

THE HISTORY of CLAYTON COUNTY

Clayton County was formally established on December 21, 1837 and organized in 1838. The recognized population at that time was 274 residents. However, the history of Clayton County dates back even further.

The Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana made a land grant to a French fur trader named Basil Giard. The land grant of 5,860 acres was six miles long, east to west, and a mile and one-half wide. Giard lived in this tract of land from 1796 to 1808 and built cabins on the present day sight of the City of McGregor. This land grant was patented by the United States government on July 2, 1844, and is still recognized today.

The City of McGregor plays an important role in Clayton County's history. On June 17, 1673, while floating down the Wisconsin River, explorers Marquette and Joliet viewed the site where the City of McGregor now sits. Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike also visited McGregor in 1805, during his trip to explore the Mississippi River. Pike's Peak, a point looking across the Mississippi and up the Wisconsin River, was named for him.

For visitors to truly understand Clayton County, they must understand its history. The history of a community directly relates to preserve our historical resources. The Clayton County Conservation Board fully understands this and is responsible for preserving some of Clayton County's most precious historical resources.

HUMAN

Six full-time persons staff Clayton County Conservation: the Director, two Naturalists, a Special Project/Park Ranger, a Maintenance Supervisor, and an Office Manager/Welcome Center Coordinator.

A wide range of part-time employees is also utilized. A Special Projects person and a maintenance/custodial person are very important to the operation. They are part-time employees but work year round. Animal caretakers and some office staff also work on a year round schedule but as part-time employees.

Approximately ten summer employees are hired and the Green Thumb, JTPA, Community Service, and Iowa Conservation Corp programs are utilized.

Without the volunteer program, the level of work and the amenities provided by Clayton County Conservation would not be possible under the current budget constraints. The volunteer program is important because so many people offer their time, experience and expertise.

With future expanded programs and projects, we may need additional staff, such as an interpreter and special projects person. Adding to the staff probably would require an increase in the budget.

FINANCIAL

The Conservation Board budget process follows other county government departments. The Supervisors have been easy to work with and are very supportive of the Boards' efforts to enhance Clayton County. At the present time, The Clayton County Conservation operation budget is approximately \$350,000. About \$75,00 of the budget consists of revenues brought in through fees and grants and the balance comes from property taxes.

Additional avenues of funding are always being sought mainly through grant opportunities. However, more and more groups are seeking grants, thus the grants are getting more competitive. The granting agencies are asking for increased local match to spread their funds out to as many applicants as possible. Grants are now considered "gap financing" by granting agencies. They don't want to be the main funding source.

The Board has discussed starting a foundation that would work towards raising money. These funds would be separate from the annual budget and would further the efforts of the Board and make more things possible. One of the problems with starting a foundation would be finding individuals to lead the foundation.

The Upper Mississippi Gaming Commission has been extremely generous with grants to Clayton County Conservation Board. Although some other counties have received funds from large corporations, Clayton County has few such firms, and thus fewer opportunities for such funding.

POPULATION and ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

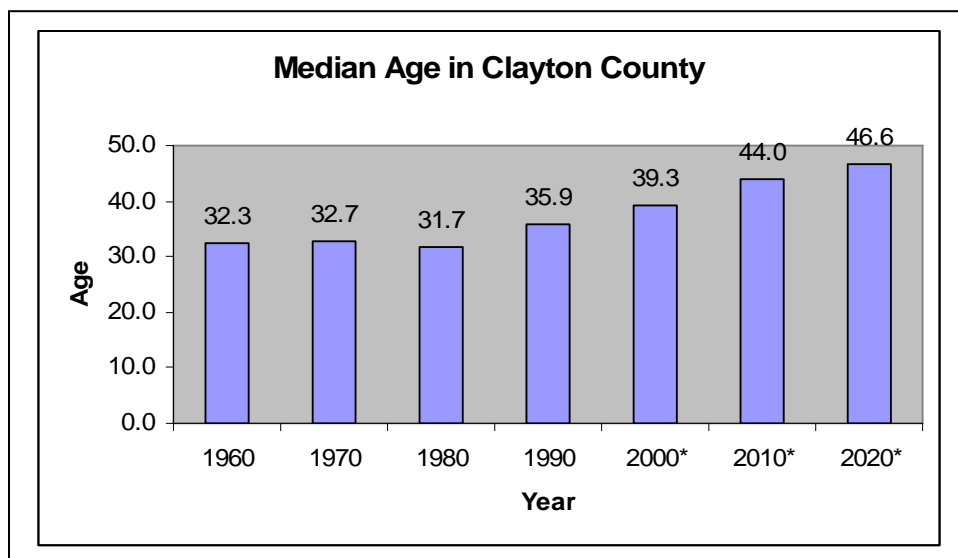
The 1990 United States Census listed the population of Clayton County. This represents a 15.4% decrease since 1950 and the lowest total since 1850 when the population was 3,870 (the population was 20,728 in 1860).

| YEAR | POPULATION | % CHANGE |
|------|------------|----------|
| 1950 | 22,522 | |
| 1960 | 21,962 | -2.5 |
| 1970 | 20,606 | -6.2 |
| 1980 | 21,098 | +2.4 |
| 1990 | 19,054 | -9.7 |

In a couple of years, we will have year 2000 information to more accurately judge population growth or lack thereof. Until then, estimates will have to do. Woods and Poole (1997) estimate the population of Clayton County to shrink from 19,054 in 1990 to 18,840 in 2000. In total, a 1.3% decrease over 1990 population.

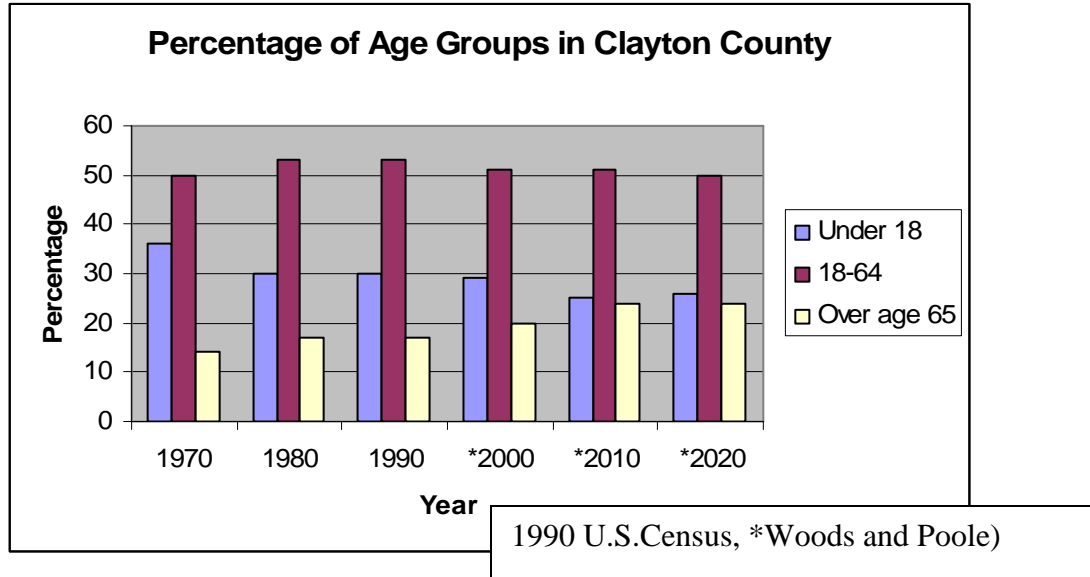
The population change will be relatively small. Whether the population increase or decrease however, people living in Clayton County – as well as many visitors – will still want recreation services.

The larger question may be what age of residents will this country be serving. As detailed in the chart below, the median age of our population has risen to 35.9 in 1990, up from 32.3 in 1960.



Census, *Woods and Poole)

The chart below further illustrates the aging trend in Clayton County.



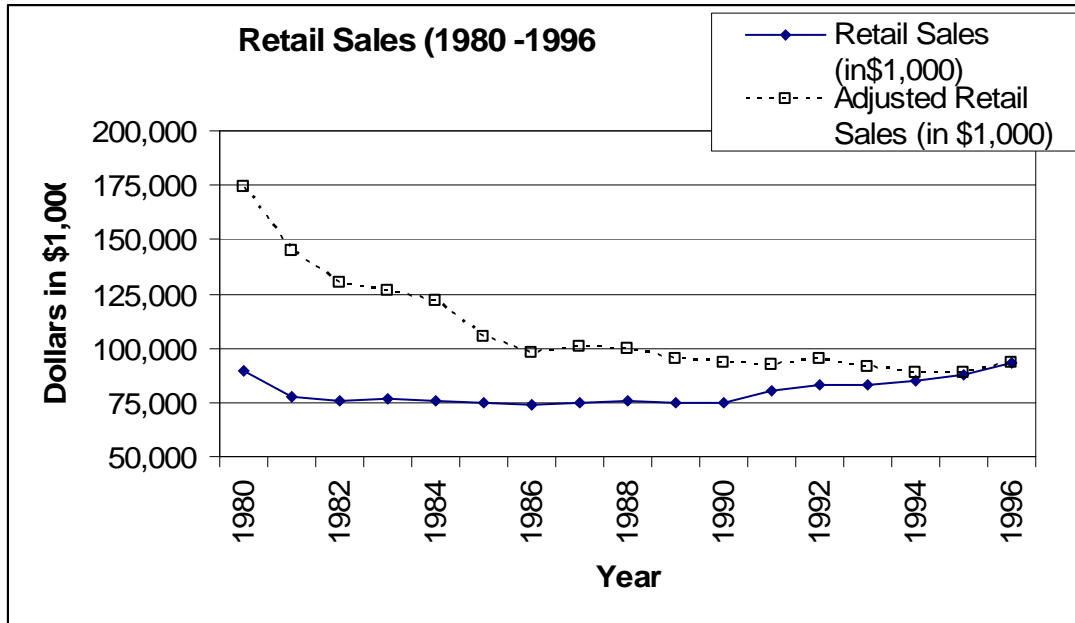
The percentage of people under age has diminished each decade, and the decline is forecast to continue. Conversely, the over 65 population has increased each decade and will continue to do so. In examining the chart, we can see the 18-64 populations shrink between 2010 and 2020. This decrease relates to the increase in the 65 and over age group.

These charts clearly show that the population is aging and that trend is expected to continue. The charts also demonstrate the loss of young people. The Board will have to determine to what extent they begin to plan activities and services to an aging population base.

The 1996 per capita income in Clayton County was \$17,578, up from \$15,013 in 1990. That compares to the State average of \$20,898 in 1995 and \$16,953 in 1990. However, when adjusted for inflation, our per capita income rose only .9 percent in the same five-year span (\$17,578 in 1995 and \$17,423 in 1990). The State average rose 6.2% over the same span.

Our population is becoming less farm oriented. More and more farm families are making ends meet by taking jobs in town, and there is the trend of larger farms owned by fewer people. In 1995 our percentage of non-farm earnings was 50.9%. In 1985 the earnings made up 43.2%. This represents a 7.7% increase in non-farm earning since 1985. The State of Iowa averages were 63.3% in 1995, only a 5% increase in the same time span. In 1995, farm earnings made up only 5.2% of all total personal income. In 1985, the figure was 11.9%, a 6.7% drop.

We are also not spending as much money in Clayton County supporting our own businesses. We are attracted to larger urban areas that can offer larger selections and often, better prices, especially for larger ticketed items. As you can see in the chart below, the gross retail sales decrease. You'll note the farm crisis in the 1980's.



Clayton County has become a tourist attraction because of its unique features, both historical and natural. With an increased emphasis on tourism by the county, recreation opportunities will be desired well into the 21st century.

TRANSPORTATION

Three major highways, U.S. Highway 18, running east and west, U.S. Highway 52, running north and south, and State Highway 13, running north and south, serve Clayton County. These three routes intersect in the northeast part of the county. These routes, along with county hard-surfaced routes, serve most of the areas in the county. Truck freight serves every city in the county.

Railroad service for the county parallels U.S. Highway 18 and the Mississippi River. The rail lines are used mostly to carry freight and agricultural products; no passenger service is available in the county.

Three airports exist in the county, a municipal airport in Monona and private airports in Elkader and Guttenberg. Scheduled airline service is available in Dubuque, Waterloo, and Cedar Rapids, all of which are within 70 miles of the county.

SOILS

The soils of Clayton County consist mainly of three types, Fayette-Nordness-Rock outcrop, Fayette-Exette-Lindley, and Downs-Fayette. Together, these three soil types cover almost 90 percent of the county with the remaining areas covered by Dorchester-Bertrand-Wapsie, Kenyon-Clyde-Floyd, and Bassett-Backbone-Winneshiek soils.

The Fayette-Nordness-Rock outcrop associations are rock outcrops and moderately sloping to very steep, well drained soils formed in loess or in loamy surficial sediments and the underlying residuum of limestone on uplands.

The Downs-Fayette associations are gently sloping to moderately steep, well drained soils formed in loess on uplands.

The Fayette-Exette-Lindley associations are strongly sloping to very steep, well drained and moderately well drained soils formed in loess and glacial till on uplands.

The Dorchester-Bertrand-Wapsie associations are nearly level to gently sloping, moderately well drained and well drained soils formed in silty, loamy, and sandy alluvial sediments on bottom land and stream benches.

The Kenyon-Clyde-Floyd associations are nearly level to gently sloping, moderately well drained to poorly well drained to somewhat excessively drained soils formed in loamy surficial sediments and the underlying glacial till on uplands.

Lastly, the Bassett-Backbone-Winneshiek associations are gently sloping to strongly sloping, moderately well drained to somewhat excessively drained soils formed in loamy surficial sediments, glacial till, and residuum of limestone on uplands.

These soil associations represent the general classes of soil types present in Clayton County.

TOPOGRAPHY

Clayton County is somewhat unique to Iowa in that very few other counties have a diverse topography. Two very distinct topographic regions exist. One is more or less a flat area with unconsolidated Iowa glacial till, while the other is an extremely dissected area where consolidated rocks are exposed in hillsides and cliffs. It is a flat to gently rolling, poorly drained, boulder strewn depositional till surface.

The exact opposite of the flat area is the remainder of the county, which is extremely hilly and was not covered by the Iowa drift. This topography is older and was eroded

during the long interval following the Nebraskan and Kansan glacial periods. Numerous valleys dissect this area.

The topography of Clayton County is diversified. It ranges in elevation from 603 feet above sea level at the floodplain of the Mississippi River to 1,250 feet above sea level on the ridges that divide the Yellow, Turkey, and Volga Rivers.

GEOLOGY

The oldest exposed rock in the county is Jordan sandstone and is approximately 500 million years old. However, in most parts of the county, this sandstone is 600 to 1,100 feet underground. Above the sandstone are limestone, shale, and dolomite formations.

As one can imagine, the availability of groundwater varies with the wide variety of rock formations. Only parts of the county are underlain with water-bearing rock. This type of rock is found at a depth of 12 to 49 feet in the southwest part of the county. Along the Mississippi, Turkey, and Volga Rivers, it's found at a depth of 18 to 30 feet.

Artesian conditions, in which underground water exists under pressure, are found throughout the county. However, only in the Northeast section of the county is pressure sufficient to produce flowing wells. Limestone and dolomite formations provide water to 80 percent of the farm wells in Clayton County.

WATERSHED

Clayton County has two major drainage courses, the Turkey and Volga Rivers. They run southeast and eventually discharge directly into the Mississippi River. These two rivers drain about four-fifths of the county. The remaining fifth drains into the Mississippi River also and consists of the Little Turkey, Yellow and Maquoketa Rivers, and Bloody Run, Sny Magill, Buck and Miner's Creeks. These rivers and streams provide excellent fishing opportunities and their floodplains provide excellent camping and hunting.

The flat low-lying areas along the Mississippi River are the most susceptible to flooding. However, the low areas along the interior rivers and streams that drain into the Mississippi also flood.

VEGETATION

Clayton County ranks second in the state behind Allamakee County in forest cover in the State. Between the time the county was settled and the present, the forest cover has been cut in half. As the value of cropland outweighed the lumber potential, the exploitation of the forests began. Over the past few decades, we have seen a halt in this practice as

education of the usefulness of forests becomes more apparent. However, the forests are mainly restricted to the river corridors, bluffs, and areas not valuable as cropland.

SUMMARY

It's not significant whether or not the population of Clayton County will increase or decrease or that the average age is increasing. Nor is it significant whether or not the expendable income of the people who live here or visit here increases. The natural and physical environment will always be here and we will depend on it for our health, livelihoods and recreation. It is the duty of the Board to see that the residents and visitors of the county understand its uniqueness, how they depend on it and how their actions effect it.

Through educational programs and practices, the Board must maintain the natural environment that will always be a source of recreation to not only the residents of Clayton County but to the rest of the world.

DEFINITIONS

To benefit the reader, the Board uses the following definitions to define their meaning of the words used throughout this plan.

INTERPRETATION is:

“An educational activity, which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”- Freeman Tilden

CONSERVATION EDUCATION is:

“...classically regarded as dealing with education about natural resources such as forests, minerals, soil, water and wildlife, and the wise use and management of these resources.”

OUTDOOR EDUCATION is:

“... a valuable method of instruction which contributes substantially to the teaching strategies of environmental education.”

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

“has a broader perspective, considering the total environment and focusing on the relationship between human values and environmental issues of all types. Instead of relying on specific solutions to problems, environmental education teaches the use of alternative solutions and an analysis of subsequent outcomes... It utilizes numerous indoor as well as outdoor activities and draws heavily on both natural and built environments in trying to prepare citizens who are capable of and motivated to act positively on behalf of environmental quality.”

THE LAND:

“...includes all natural resources such as our soil, plants, wildlife, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, ground water and air.

NATURAL COMMUNITIES:

“...the historic interaction and interdependence between living organisms, both plants and animals, for food, shelter and security.

NATURAL AREA:

An area that retains a significant portion of its’ historic topography and vegetation.

VISIONING

Following is the exercise the Board completed to help them do some brainstorming. Out of this session came a list of objectives and, when grouped into areas of similarity, goals.

Visioning is dreaming. You have to ask yourself, “Where do I want Clayton County Conservation to be in five years?” What we want to do is some brainstorming, think of any and all ideas regarding Clayton County Conservation’s future.

Items to help you get started:

- Think about the whole picture, all operations of Clayton County Conservation
- Think about changes needed in present facilities
- Think about new facilities
- Think about current programs and services that could be changed
- Think about new programs and services
- Think about corporate policies
- Think about the public being served
- Think about financial considerations
- Think about federal/state regulations
- Think about existing resources
- Think about our strengths/weaknesses
- Think about survey results
- Think about values

This list of ideas will help us develop a long-range plan that we can put into shorter time increments (five years). Then we can set goals and objectives.

VISIONING – List of Responses

- Would like to see that every County resident has a nice area with multiple uses within five to ten miles of their home
- Would like to see Clayton County hook up with local, regional, state, and national trail systems
- Eliminate all sink hole dumps and all farmers practicing good conservation
- Would like to see good watershed management programs and practices
- Would like to see educational programs expanded
- Would like to re-introduce species that have been eliminated and establish proper habitat for those species
- Would like to see maximum use of the Osborne Center facilities and grounds

-
- We need a collaboration of efforts and ideas between public and private partners in land conservation, watershed management, educational items, and to be sure to include the youth organizations (FFA, 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts)
 - Continue strong youth educational programs
 - Expand on adult education
 - Adult agriculture education
 - Would like to exhibit the history of land use and misuse in Clayton County, as well as the State, to further education (George Maier Collection)
 - Preservation of unique lands in a collaborative effort with other like-minded organizations
 - Get more involved in recycling education
 - We would like to see 80% of garbage being recycled in the very near future
 - We need to locate recycled materials, suppliers of those materials and end users, preferably within the County
 - Look at a public/private composting initiative
 - Start at Joy Springs for Operation Greenstripe
 - Would like to see parks and facilities accessible for all individuals
 - Collaborate with agencies that have facilities (parks, etc.) adjoining our own, to better utilize resources
 - Collaborate with colleges and universities through grants and volunteers to start a lecture series for the educational benefit of adults and youth in Clayton County
 - Hook up Osborne to the internet
 - Develop more partnerships with private companies, individuals and users
 - Finish the top floor of the Osborne Center and develop a resource center (library, interactive computers)
 - Set up a volunteer organization to help with fundraising and public support
 - Maybe we need to have a volunteer drive
 - We should have fieldtrips (single day trips) to conservation areas, facilities, and programs in the area for seniors, youth, farmers, etc...
 - Coordinate with health industry to use trails and other services to promote general good health
 - Look at a volunteer program for kids
 - We need to plug in to the #1 resource in Clayton County – the Mississippi River
 - Evening and weekend programs for campers year-round
 - Need to double staff size
 - Incorporate our values into everything we do
 - Preserve the structures at Motor Mill
 - “Mend fences” with the county historical society
 - Need to coordinate better with individual City historical societies to inventory exhibits, libraries, etc...

- Develop web site and establish links to and from various organizations groups

SURVEY RESPONSES

1. Please place a check by all of the recreation and leisure activities you participate in:

(These are rated from most to least frequent.)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Picnicking | 199 |
| 2. Walking/Hiking/Jogging | 168 |
| 3. Nature Enjoyment/Appreciation | 152 |
| 4. Heritage/History Interests | 132 |
| 5. Camping | 124 |
| tent | 81 |
| trailer | 39 |
| 6. Nature Programs | 106 |
| 7. Fishing/Ice Fishing/Trout Fishing | 105 |
| 8. Boating/Canoeing | 100 |
| 9. Swimming | 93 |
| 10. Bicycling/Mountain Biking | 55 |
| 11. Hunting/Trapping | 49 |
| 12. Snowmobiling | 40 |
| 13. Cross Country Skiing | 34 |
| 14. Horseback Riding | 8 |
| 15. Flying | 3 |
| 16. Iowa Store | 2 |
| Energy Cons./Renewable Energy Ed. | 2 |
| 17. Alpine Skiing | 1 |
| Tree ID & Planting/Learning | 1 |
| Archaeology | 1 |
| Archery | 1 |
| Farming | 1 |
| Sledding | 1 |
| Museum & Animal Visits | 1 |
| Golf | 1 |
| Volunteering at Osborne | 1 |

2. Please place a check by all of the Clayton County Conservation park, recreation and natural areas that you use. Indicate with “F” for frequently, “S” for sometimes, and “R” for rarely.

Most to lease frequently used:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Osborne Park | 101 |
| 2. Turkey River Park | 29 |
| 3. Motor Mill Historic Park | 22 |
| 4. Chicken Ridge Scenic Lookout | 10 |
| 5. Bloody Run Park | 8 |
| 6. Joy Springs Park | 6 |
| 7. Lovers Leap | 5 |
| Pony Hollow Trail | 5 |
| Buck Creek Access | 5 |
| 8. Mederville Canoe Access | 3 |
| Frieden Park | 3 |
| Frenchtown Park | 3 |
| 9. Elkader Wetlands | 2 |
| Volga White Pine Preserve | 2 |
| 10. Stone Pine Plantation | 1 |

Most to least sometimes used:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Osborne Park | 134 |
| 2. Motor Mill Historic Park | 92 |
| 3. Turkey River Park | 62 |
| 4. Chicken Ridge Scenic Lookout | 48 |
| 5. Bloody Run Park | 33 |
| 6. Joy Springs Park | 22 |
| 7. Pony Hollow Trail | 18 |
| Frenchtown Park | 18 |
| Mederville Canoe Access | 18 |
| 8. Volga White Pine Preserve | 17 |
| Frieden Park | 17 |
| Lovers Leap | 17 |
| 9. Buck Creek Access | 10 |
| 10. Elkader Wetlands | 9 |
| 11. Stone Pine Plantation | 8 |

Most to lease rarely used:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 1. Elkader Wetlands | 60 |
| 2. Frenchtown Park | 58 |
| Bloody Run Park | 58 |
| 3. Frieden Park | 57 |
| Stone Pine Plantation | 57 |
| 4. Volga White Pine Reserve | 55 |
| Mederville Canoe Access | 55 |
| 5. Buck Creek Access | 54 |
| 6. Joy Springs Park | 52 |
| Lovers Leap | 52 |
| 7. Pony Hollow Trail | 49 |
| 8. Chicken Ridge Scenic Lookout | 46 |
| 9. Turkey River Park | 38 |
| 10. Motor Mill Historic Park | 33 |
| 11. Osborne Park | 10 |

3. What is your impression of the current County Conservation Board programs, facilities and areas?

- Terrific. Probably one of the best county park systems in the U.S., best we've seen.
- Satisfactory
- Good (20)
- Have always enjoyed Osborne, everything always neat and clean. Living in Fayette County, not as familiar with other areas listed.
- They are run well. I think the programs are educational and fun to do. The facilities are excellent and the areas are well maintained.
- Good, I like the educational programs
- I think it's great. I refer a lot of people to the Center
- Well maintained, good programs offered. Do not like the "zoo" exhibits, so am very pleased to see that there is going to be a change. And why have animals that aren't native?
- Nice facility
- Great (6)
- Pony Hollow Trail needs to be developed from Elkader Park, you can't find the entrance. Need to keep horses off.
- Excellent programs, events, and facilities; although I do not agree with the animal exhibit concept. As far as I am concerned Clayton County has one of the best county programs in the state.
- Help the animals; natural settings no cement floors, dislike the cages.
- Needs more money.

- I think finances should be directed away from the Osborne Park area, especially the building, and spread around the county more. Yes, the facilities at Osborne are very nice and are a nice resource for the county, but I think an inordinate amount has been invested in relation to needs of the county, which have been neglected.
- The Welcome Center needs exterior maintenance soon, before it deteriorates any further! Has anything been done to siding since its been built?
- You are on top of things. We are proud of our recreational and natural areas. We are so fortunate to have the WONDERFUL Osborne Conservation Center in our county!
- They are kept up pretty good. Would like to see the rules posted at the parks and would like to see the parks patrolled more often, especially on the weekends and at night. Once in awhile things get a little rowdy in the parks, and could use a cop going through. It would help if there were more handicap areas made so handicap folks could get down to fish, especially for trout. Some activities for the Senior Citizens at Osborne about nature would be nice and some would not soon forget it and Osborne would benefit in the long run.
- My impression is that I really don't know what you do or what parks you take care of, with the exception of Osborne and Motor Mill. Your newsletter features Osborne all the time, perhaps you could highlight another park in each issue as well.
- Do need electricity at campgrounds at Osborne
- The nature programs at school and the Center are great
- We thoroughly enjoy the use of these free family oriented recreational opportunities. We try to catch as many activities as time allows.
- The Board is doing a good job (2)
- Maybe to many programs
- Excellent, good personnel, facilities (2)
- I hear so many good reports, but we are not outdoor people, so we don't take advantage of what you offer. I appreciate the school programs
- Very impressed. Hopeful that the current level can be maintained with expansion and improvements as funding allows
- Fair
- Very clean and neat (3)
- Very Nice (7)
- The ones that I have been at were just fine for me
- Osborne is great. We enjoy going there, our children love the animals.
- I haven't been to Osborne for a while, but the in school programs are great!
- I think you give many people, young to elderly, learning experiences, enjoyment, entertainment, and a chance to appreciate our county and state. Keep up the good work.
- I thank you for allowing free primitive camping at some of your county parks. It helps keep the expenses down for travelers. Its sad and depressing to see the large animals in such small pens.
- Good, should make public aware of places
- I appreciate the variety offer to meet all age levels
- Excellent educational programs. Students also enjoy camps
- There is a need for more horse camping

- Rest room facilities at Osborne campground are BAD!
- Pro-active; Optimism- wish you had more manpower to achieve goals.
- I think they are good. The one think that I think could be worked on are ski trails, more winter activities to draw people from the area. I know there are some, but they need to be shown more to the public. More places could be made for sledding
- I'm proud of many areas in our county and enjoy taking guests to visit them; however I would like to see better restrooms and possibly showers at Osborne campground
- I feel we have the nicest and most modern facilities of any county around up, the only complaints I would have is when we were camping and used the pack for many years, we really missed the lack of electrical hook ups and electricity. We really enjoy the programs presented through the years. I thoroughly commend you on your neat ground. Do Not Get Rid of the animals.
- Excellent (9)
- Wonderful
- Good, only they need more lighting in the campground and take care of the toilets.
- Well taken care of (3)
- Positive
- Very well developed where needed (Osborne site) well maintained and staffed
- Well kept up
- It is a credit and a treat to the area for the museum and living animals for all to observe at Osborne
- Okay (3)
- For the most part good, need to develop more tourism in the area
- There are a lot more programs and areas that I was not aware of. I do like the programs that I am familiar with – programs in the school and in the Center
- Super, well kept parks, well managed, and clean
- Great I am glad you are recognizing some of the other areas
- I feel you are doing a good job, keep up the good work
- They have been quite active in developing attractions as with everything else we are involved in, money is hard to come by – everyone wants donation and how far can you go with giving?
- Need to develop and maintain what you already have
- I would like to see the campgrounds with some water and electric hock ups
- We are really fortunate to have such nice facilities close by. Staff seems much more relaxed and it shows in the projects they do.
- I enjoy the nature center exhibits. I bring my kids over to see the animals. I am from Tripoli, so not too close for frequent use of your areas.
- Impressive, I don't like the "zoo" facility at Osborne Center
- Wonderful, dedicated staff. Great ongoing plans
- Well maintained, clean parks. Interesting displays at Osborne, animal park is very interesting.
- I think it's very important. It fills a void that was long overdue.
- Excellent facility, well planned, offers many activities, well cared for, friendly and helpful staff, appreciate the trails (availability and up-keep).

- They are doing a great job, keep it up.
- Osborne is nice; only one I've been to
- What I know of them is limited, but I am impressed with what I have seen.
- Osborne is very nice; we always take our friends and family there to visit.
- Have only been to the Osborne area. Was very impressed with cleanliness and information available on trails.
- Not used that much.
- Should make public more aware of places.
- Osborne is Great, we enjoy going there. Our children love the animals.
- They are really nice – I guess I just haven't explored them! I don't really even know where some of the parks are!
- I haven't been to the Osborne Park for awhile, but the school programs are great.
- I appreciate the variety offered to meet all age levels.
- Very good (4)
- They are doing a very good job (2)
- I enjoy the displays at Osborne. A good place to take grandchildren. Keep it up.
- Need cement trail for biking, walking and rollerblading.
- Needs to be bigger, more room for the animals.
- My greatest concern is the habitat for the animals at Osborne Park.
- I think you guys are on the right track
- A shower house, electrical hook ups, improved restrooms, and a dumping station for bathrooms & campers. (4)
- Doing a fine job. Lovely and very enjoyable. (2)
- I think they are doing a lot more now than they use to.
- Buildings are too nice and the animal enclosures need improvement in size and quality.
- very pleasant and relaxing
- Love Osborne area.
- Well done.
- I like the nature
- Nice job
- Growing
- Outlying areas are to often overshadowed by Osborne.
- Generally positive
- The Board doesn't know what they are doing for the betterment of Clayton County. The facilities and area are very good and the programs are some of the best in the state.
- Fine, keep it up
- They are doing their best.
- Enjoy them very much, sometimes.
- We have a very positive impression. So do the outsiders that come to the area.

4. *In your opinion, what priority should the Clayton County Conservation Board place on each of the following programs and facilities? Indicate with “H” for high priority, “M” for medium priority, “L” for low priority, or “U” if unsure.*

“H” for High Priority

| | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 1. | Youth Outdoor Learning Programs | 175 |
| 2. | Soil Erosion/Conservation Farm Practices | 124 |
| 3. | Forest Management and Reforestation in Clayton County | 116 |
| 4. | Wildlife Habitat Development | 113 |
| 5. | Animal Exhibit | 104 |
| 6. | Water Quality/ Watershed Protection | 98 |
| 7. | Iowa Welcome Center Activities | 85 |
| 8. | Developed Camping Areas | 84 |
| 9. | Historical/ Cultural Preservation | 80 |
| 10. | Multi-Use Trails | 79 |
| 11. | Assist Local Residents in Wildlife Habitat Development | 73 |
| | Multi-Use Recreation Areas | 73 |
| 12. | Adult Outdoor Learning programs | 71 |
| 13. | Canoe Access Sites | 64 |
| | Winter Recreation Areas | 64 |
| 14. | Swimming Areas | 62 |
| 15. | Fishing Access Sites | 60 |
| 16. | Acquire Additional Recreational Areas in Clayton County | 49 |
| 17. | Group Camping Areas | 46 |
| 18. | Acquire Additional Natural or Conservation Areas | 43 |
| 19. | Primitive Camping Areas | 41 |
| 20. | Public Hunting Areas | 38 |

“M” for Medium Priority

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1. | Group Camping Areas | 95 |
| 2. | Multi-Use Trails | 93 |
| | Canoe Access Sites | 93 |
| 3. | Multi-Use Recreation Areas | 92 |
| 4. | Fishing Access Sites | 90 |
| 5. | Iowa Welcome Center Activities | 89 |
| 6. | Winter Recreation Areas | 86 |
| 7. | Developed Camping Areas | 82 |
| 8. | Primitive Camping Areas | 78 |
| | Adult Outdoor Learning programs | 78 |
| 9. | Assist Local Residents in Wildlife Habitat Development | 77 |
| 10. | Acquire Additional Natural or Conservation Areas | 75 |

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| 11. | Acquire Additional Recreational Areas in Clayton County | 73 |
| | Historical/ Cultural Preservation | 73 |
| 12. | Animal Exhibit | 65 |
| 13. | Water Quality/ Watershed Protection | 64 |
| 14. | Public Hunting Areas | 62 |
| 15. | Swimming Areas | 61 |
| 16. | Wildlife Habitat Development | 58 |
| | Forest Management and Reforestation in Clayton County | 58 |
| 17. | Soil Erosion/Conservation Farm Practices | 47 |
| 18. | Youth Outdoor Learning Programs | 35 |

“L” for Low Priority

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 1. | Public Hunting Areas | 68 |
| 2. | Swimming Areas | 57 |
| 3. | Acquire Additional Recreational Areas in Clayton County | 53 |
| 4. | Acquire Additional Natural or Conservation Areas | 47 |
| | Primitive Camping Areas | 47 |
| 5. | Adult Outdoor Learning programs | 36 |
| 6. | Winter Recreation Areas | 27 |
| 7. | Canoe Access Sites | 26 |
| | Assist Local Residents in Wildlife Habitat Development | 26 |
| 8. | Developed Camping Areas | 24 |
| | Fishing Access Sites | 24 |
| 9. | Canoe Access Sites | 23 |
| 10. | Historical/ Cultural Preservation | 21 |
| 11. | Animal Exhibit | 18 |
| | Soil Erosion/Conservation Farm Practices | 18 |
| 12. | Multi-Use Trails | 17 |
| 13. | Wildlife Habitat Development | 16 |
| 14. | Multi-Use Recreation Areas | 14 |
| 15. | Iowa Welcome Center Activities | 13 |
| 16. | Water Quality/ Watershed Protection | 7 |
| 17. | Forest Management and Reforestation in Clayton County | 5 |
| 18. | Youth Outdoor Learning Programs | 4 |

“U” if Unsure

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|----|---|----|
| 1. | Acquire Additional Natural or Conservation Areas | 26 |
| 2. | Primitive Camping Areas | 23 |
| | Public Hunting Areas | 23 |
| 3. | Acquire Additional Recreational Areas in Clayton County | 21 |
| 4. | Group Camping Areas | 19 |

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| 5. | Forest Management and Reforestation in Clayton County | 16 |
| 6. | Iowa Welcome Center | 15 |
| | Swimming Areas | 15 |
| 7. | Assist Local Residents in Wildlife Habitat Development | 14 |
| | Group Camping Areas | 14 |
| 8. | Water Quality/ Watershed Protection | 12 |
| 9. | Developed Camping Areas | 11 |
| 10. | Wildlife Habitat Development | 9 |
| | Multi-Use Recreation Areas | 9 |
| | Winter Recreation Areas | 9 |
| | Historical/ Cultural Preservation | 9 |
| 11. | Soil Erosion/Conservation Farm Practices | 7 |
| 12. | Animal Exhibit | 6 |
| | Fishing Access Sites | 6 |
| 13. | Youth Outdoor Learning Programs | 5 |
| 14. | Multi-Use Trails | 3 |

5. Additional comments, thoughts and ideas about the activities and/ or the future priorities of the Clayton Count Conservation Board programs, facilities and areas.

- You're welcome. Keep up the good work.
- We have too many deer.
- Clayton County is far ahead of all other counties with its educational programs for youth. I think Osborne does a fine job, I'm just not an outdoor person.
- Find volunteers to help on Southern Trails.
- Always fun to come and visit, very nice facility and people.
- Renew communication with George Maier.
- Love the buffalo and elk even though they are hard to see sometimes.
- Need camping along the Mississippi River
- Charge admission
- Try to keep available seedling order opportunities for small orders. We need those small plantings also.
- Before the '93 Flood, I walked Pony Hollow Trail. Now it is all tall weeds and mud and it is hard to find the entrance.
- The heritage celebration days every year is very interesting and nice for a family outing. We participated with the kids in the Fishing Clinic course and it's a nice event for kids and so is the Hunting safety course. We think Osborne is suppose to educate people on nature and outdoor things and it does a good job. We would like to see more ag/conservation education stuff done there the promote cooperation between ag/conservation.
- Would be good to develop access to rivers for boaters and canoers, cross-country ski trails that parallel streams and river, also to be used for walking tails, fishing access, perhaps try to trace old RR Row's between Garber and Volga.

- I think maintenance of programs in existence need to be a priority. May youth benefited greatly from the Iowa Youth Conservation Corps program and the parks benefited as well. It takes many hands working together to keep up the areas.
- Be sure you have enough maintenance and money before purchasing any more land or buildings. Also be sure funds are equally distributed.
- Before consideration of obtaining additional recreation/conservation areas, we feel its better to continue t improve, implement more, new activities, and diversities to the properties you already have; and as stated above, we feel some of these are “H” priority and certainly fall under the realm of conservation, but agencies already work on these areas – it would make better use of time and money to let them continue doubling up to much.
- I think the state should put a stop to big and little farmers alike in the practice of dozing off every last sink hole, rough ground, ditch, or anywhere there is a little but of woods left, just to get into a state funded program and at the same time where is acres of land standing idle that were wooded not to long ago. Save the Woods!
- Possible bike trail – Backbone to Elkader or Welcome Center.
- Your county parks are rather difficult to find. It would be very helpful if you could place some signs along certain roads and print up a map or a brochure with accurate directions.
- Please no snowmobiling! Please no all terrain vehicles! Keep it natural and educational. Publicize some of the outlying parks.
- Playground equipment for children, and seats nearby for adults.
- At Osborne have flush toilets and shower houses in campgrounds, something similar to the one at Pike’s Peak campground.
- Iowa Room would be a high priority (?#4) if you could sell nature related items.
- Install walking bridges at Motor Mill
- At Bloody Run add an all terrain mountain bike trail
- Land needs to be put in public ownership to protect it from “development.”
- We really enjoy the arboretum at Osborne. Its nice to see trees that will grow in this climate, that you don’t normally see.
- Advertisement of these places/parks; many I have never heard of.
- Clayton Count is far ahead of all the other counties with their educational programs for the youth.
- I have a picture, plaques, letters and etc. of my late brother – Senator Bill Tieden – That I would like to give to the Welcome Center. Thank you, Dale Tieden’s sister, Arrah Laven Polkow.
- Your county parks are rather difficult to find. It would be helpful if you could place signs along certain roads and print up a map or brochure with accurate directions.

- Think in terms of the Conservation Board representing the past, present, and future: I commend the CCCB and staff for efforts in the past such as historic preservation, Heritage Days, etc. People possess and inherent desire to remain in touch with their past nostalgia. The historic abundance in our area should be a basis for continuing such programs and events. As for the present, usage areas, displays, Welcome Center representation, all satisfy an essential need for the community and public. We can all be proud of our fishing, boating, camping, wildlife, and other usage resources. The future is an area that the Conservation Board can and should take more of a leadership role in. An opportunity is waiting for education and demonstration of renewable energy and resource conserving practices. Can the Board promote solar, wind and geothermal energy by setting up displays or even a display home incorporating renewable energy practices? Would something such as an electrical car or truck be used by the staff to model proper conservation approaches for the future? How about organic farming or gardening? Wouldn't it be impressive to serve hot water needs of the visitor center by solar heat collectors instead of contemporary energy consuming water heaters? The Conservation Board is in a superior position to educate people on the future applications of energy conservation/resource conservation and serve as an active role model by using them. Darol Engelhardt, Elkader 245-1868. (1)

- I recently wrote you regarding the habitat for the animals at Osborne. I have been advised that you share my concern and changes are on the way. Keep up the good work
- Trim the branches so a motor home can drive under without snagging. (10' at least), electrical hook ups for keeping the battery charged up for lights (not air cond.), otherwise the park is nice, a nice toilet and a dumping station for the campers. When the holding tank is full we have to leave. Lawrence Jaster Bellevue, IA 52031
- Guy who feeds does a good job
- We've watched and enjoyed your programs and facilities grow in the past 12 years. All of your plans are well thought out and implemented. You haven't grown too quickly and are very well organized. Clayton County is a great place.
- We find Osborne Days to be very interesting and enjoy it every year.
- Thanks for all the wonderful times we've had in your parks and recreation areas.
- Would like to see a live Polka band and/or country western band.
- Could use more port-a-potties at Heritage Days.
- The staff are doing a fine job
- A Priority should be a footbridge at Motor Mill and development of the tremendous historic/ natural heritage potential there.
- Widow 76, so you understand why I don't participate
- At my age (82) I'm not able to make use of the parks. Years ago we camped in some of the parks.
- Consider additional development in relationships with shared county economic development programs, ideas etc.
- Good work

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths of the Clayton Count Conservation System

- 33% activities or services that are provided
- 20% the location of the parks or the location of the county throughout the region
- 18% a strong Board and good employees
- 11% the education programs
- 9% clean and well maintained parks
- 3% community support
- 2% parks are popular with tourists
- 2% the volunteers
- 2% miscellaneous

Weaknesses of the Clayton County Conservation System

- 34% need to update parks
- 20% lack of funding and/or resources
- 15% need more promotion and publicity
- 10% need more adult education
- 7% need more county-wide emphasis
- 5% shortage of staff
- 5% vandalism and lack of DNR patrolling
- 2% need more volunteers
- 2% lack of vision

Opportunities of the Clayton County Conservation System

- 54% could expand our activities and programs
- 24% could expand or create better facilities
- 11% could get the public more involved
- 5% could expand the board and employee education
- 3% could create organization to help with fundraising
- 3% could create home page for the internet

Threats to the Clayton County Conservation System

- 26% lack of funding
- 18% lack of public support
- 16% vandalism
- 10% keeping up with demand and maintenance
- 8% board and staff apathy
- 6% lack in number of employees
- 6% not enough time
- 3% lack of publicity
- 3% lack of volunteers
- 3% possible law suits

SWOT ANALYSIS LIST of RESPONSES

Strengths

- clean
- lots of things to see
- new and modern
- hard working and friendly employees
- good education
- liked by many of the tourists
- cleanliness
- care and concern for improvement by employees as well as visitors
- availability – open almost year long (office) and camping always available
- positive attitudes
- resources abundant – people are generous with time and items
- many small, beautiful parks
- a Welcome Center that is both a major attraction and a valuable asset
- good people on the team
- well cared for grounds
- a strong record of outreach and environmental education
- good community support
- our Heritage Days weekend is a well run, fun, educational event that is a draw for tourism, as well as the local populace
- undeveloped areas, that are true conservation/ nature works areas
- “special” area of lands that are beautiful and unique
- northeast Iowa location – centralized between Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, and Prarie Du Chien
- very well maintained for fund resources that are available
- good Conservation Board and staff that work together well and want what’s best for Clayton County now and in the future.
- excellent camp ground
- good working together Board, we all agree on many items
- good location along the highways (Joy Springs, Bloody Run, Osborne, Sny Magill)
- the parks are kept in as natural a setting as can be maintained and yet well groomed
- fire rings have been recently purchased and are in place
- fishing for all ages
- trails and hiking
- plants, trees, animal (identification); the whole system is an educational project
- very good location
- by a casino
- the system has had a very good start
- wildlife exhibit
- established trail systems

- wide variety of activities
- locations (located throughout county)
- various opportunities like fishing, sledding and animal exhibit
- interest for all types of families
- current education programs
- limited funds – but we continue to improve the equipment in the parks, i.e. playground equipment, grills, and latrines
- educational programs
- improving animal exhibit is something we can be proud of
- Board and staff work together toward same goals
- the parks are available at no charge
- youth environmental education programs
- strong, dedicated staff
- excellent facilities at Osborne
- top notch Welcome Center
- supportive Board, especially in fiscal matters
- high level of public support for the Osborne Park/ Conservation and Welcome Center

| | |
|-----|---|
| 33% | Activities of services that are provided |
| 20% | The location of the parks or the location of the county throughout the region |
| 18% | A strong Board and good employees |
| 11% | The education programs |
| 9% | Clean and well maintained parks |
| 3% | Community support |
| 2% | Parks are popular with tourists |
| 2% | The volunteers |
| 2% | Miscellaneous |

Weaknesses

- adult and family environmental education
- lack of emphasis on county-wide program, regarding management, maintenance and development of area
- funding problems
- Board does not have the resources (money, manpower, equip., etc.) to satisfy the diverse requests from visitors, county residents, individual board members, staff desires, etc.
- fundraising for special projects
- lacking the ability to acquire additional special properties connected to current park properties
- create adult education system
- publicize parks more
- look outside the “box”, it’s hard to see things differently from how its always been

- continue to update equipment and facilities
- promoting outlying parks
- being able to spend more time at other parks
- the need to update equipment
- water and electricity needed at Osborne campground
- toilet upgrade
- showers
- need maps to all parks
- need more volunteers
- lack of funds; every year we lose more grants because of government cut back
- short on staff
- to much vandalism
- animal pens are a disgrace
- no canoe access on Turkey River
- need more patrolling by DNR and game wardens
- some areas could be modernized for our modern visitors
- getting people to visit here, not only “Clayton County” but to Iowa
- Funding
- job resources and pay for employees
- don’t see a lot of conservation practices, sessions, teaching for farmers, who are our major job sources in the area (need to teach farmers about runoff into creeks and rivers)
- we neglect our counties connection to one of America’s great natural assets, the Mississippi River
- we tend to focus too many of our resources at one site
- we do a poor job managing our farmland
- we could expand our trail system and canoe accesses
- we could provide better restrooms in the park systems for campers
- better facilities for animals
- more employees for specific jobs – specialized areas
- more exhibits out side besides animals
- get the rest of the county parks known about – let people know where they are
- put enough money into certain areas of the budget

- 34% Need to update parks
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- 7% Need more county-wide emphasis
- 5% Shortage of staff
- 5% Vandalism and lack of DNR patrolling
- 2% Need more volunteers
- 2% Lack of vision

Opportunities

- get more nature oriented
- give public tours of all the parks so they know what the County has
- get public more involved
- electricity and water for camping (could bring more campers)
- more exhibits
- more natural setting for animals
- hire more employees
- advertise more
- give more of a “sense of ownership” to communities other than Elkader
- address contemporary land use issues with environmental education that connects with adults
- provide more hunting opportunities
- be more connected with other organizations that share our general mission,

Conservation

- canoeing, fishing, hunting, camping, bird watching, snowmobiling, skiing, naturalist for education, animal exhibits (alive and deceased), hiking, sightseeing, leaf watchers, horseback riding, lots of variety
- lots of education for children in the area (must educate the people who will be living in the area, not just the educated kids who leave after high school and college and never return like 90% of the kids)
- pamphlets for many items, get more wildlife items to sell
- keep fishing clinic going every spring
- stress gun safety courses that are held a few times each year
- archery at Osborne, all kinds can be done
- we have youth helping in summer so they get hands on experience
- youth programs
- hunter safety
- very good outdoor recreation, fishing camping, canoeing
- scenic areas
- boating on the Mississippi
- create a “friends organization” to assist with fundraising
- create a home page for the internet
- continue to visit other parks
- need to develop a better volunteer program, this could help with current and future programs
- offer a quality recreational and outdoor experience and area
- great base of outlying natural and recreational areas have been acquired and proper management, maintenance and development can provide for needs into the future

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Threats

- apathy from general populace
- lack of public support
- Board and staff not performing to our full potential and letting apathy prevail
- budget constrains
- limited funds, slows down the upgrading of our park
- possible budget cuts in the future or increase in expenses but not increases in budget
- number of staff available for serving public
- vandalism
- possible law suits from injury
- lack of money
- party's that involve youth drinking
- damage to park areas, pushing over out houses, fires outside rings, burning shelters, smoking garbage cans
- need of better equipment for park upkeep
- campers don't have bathrooms and showers, or electricity at Osborne
- lack of respect, education and conservation practices
- funding
- no vision of future
- lack of employees
- lack of public support of government agencies
- lack of time
- lack of volunteers
- lack of money in the budget
- people not knowing what we have
- bigger parks (State parks)

- 26% Lack of funding
- 18% Lack of public support
- 16% Vandalism
- 10% Keeping up with demand and maintenance
- 8% Board and staff apathy
- 6% Lack in number of employees
- 6% Not enough time
- 3% Lack of publicity
- 3% Lack of volunteers
- 3% Possible law suits

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