

2020 Annual Report

Tedesco Environmental Corridor & Trail

Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor (Tedesco Park) is on the southwest edge of Ames and adjacent to the ISU Research Park. The park demonstrates several conservation strategies to improve water quality and reduce erosion from the rural-urban watershed runoff. The Tedesco Corridor Trail (Tedesco Trail) connects Tedesco Park. It also connects to its neighbors and communities south and west of Ames by way of the R38 roadside trail to Slater. Slater is a hub of paved, off-road trails: the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail, the High Trestle Trail and, the Ankeny Trail.



In 2020 the Outdoor Alliance partnered with a group of landowners led by Steve Burgason to raise funds for enriching the recreational trail from University Boulevard to R38. Enhancements to the trail will allow native plants to take root, habitat become established, and wildlife flourish on the former railroad line that it follows in part. The enhancements will make the trail itself a destination for some and a better experience for those passing through. With these improvements, the Ames to Kelly railroad line will again be a welcoming gateway into Ames.

The new trail is now open. The native plantings, bird and bat houses, benches, a dog station and a bike station are still being developed. These improvements are expected to cost about \$32,000. By January, more than half of these funds had been raised through the Tedesco Trail GoFundMe page (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/tedesco-bike-trail>).

This is the first time the Outdoor Alliance has worked with Steve Burgason's group of neighbors and friends as well as using the GoFundMe site. Doing so, has made fundraising possible even during the Covid-19 pandemic. Fundraising is ongoing and you can still support this Story County Conservation project by going to the Tedesco Trail GoFundMe link (shown above) or donating directly to Outdoor Alliance at www.oasco.org.

Library Outreach 2020

The Outdoor Alliance, like so many other groups, cancelled many of its events this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a way to move forward, the Outdoor Alliance purchased four books from Iowa outdoor photographer, Ty Smedes: *The Return of Iowa's Eagles*, *Iowa's Wild Beauty*, and two copies of *Capturing Iowa's Seasons*. The books were then donated to libraries in the county: Cambridge, Huxley, Nevada and Story City. Though the Outdoor Alliance has partnered with the Ames public library for years, this was the first time we reached out to some of the other public libraries across the county and are looking forward to our next project with them.



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Access Ada Hayden Boat Dock



The Outdoor Alliance partnered with Access Ada Hayden, including Skunk River Paddlers (SRP), a local paddling group, as well as others on a project to allow more people the opportunity to safely launch paddle craft. The Outdoor Alliance jointly submitted a grant proposal with Chris White, SRP, to the Story County Community Foundation Community grant program. The proposal successfully raised \$6,000. This will help cover the estimated \$85,000 cost of purchasing and installing an accessible boat dock at Ada Hayden. The City of Ames has made a commitment to this project and included it in the 2021-22 budget year but challenged the community to raise \$35,000. The grant will go towards meeting this goal.

Outdoor Alliance Assists Story County Conservation Land Acquisitions

The Outdoor Alliance of Story has been raising funds for Story County Conservation's public land acquisitions since its inception. The following projects include direct donations from funds raised from members and friends as well as facilitating other's direct contributions in 2020:

- **Sleepy Hollow** is a popular access to the South Skunk River across from Ada Hayden Heritage Park. The Outdoor Alliance contributed funds as well as raised other funds to help Story County Conservation acquire an additional 15 acres along the river.
- Two other land acquisition projects with Story County Conservation are still in the fundraising phase: 55-acre **Wicks Wildlife Area** just north of Story City, and the 37-acre **Osheim Acquisition** just south of Story City. Both are adjacent to the South Skunk River, add to the growing checkerboard greenbelt along the river that helps protect wildlife, our drinking water and will help prevent flooding. The Outdoor Alliance has already contributed to these two acquisitions.
- The Outdoor Alliance also contributed to a fourth Story County Conservation land acquisition in 2020. Story County Conservation is in the process of raising funds to acquire land adjacent to **McFarland Park**. Fundraising is on-going.

Annual Meeting

The **2020 Annual Meeting of the Outdoor Alliance** was held in February at the Ames Public Library. The meeting began with a brief presentation by Diane Birt, Outdoor Alliance president, on accomplishments and goals of the Alliance. Her comments were followed with a presentation by Ty Smedes entitled "Wildlife Photography." Ty's photography and stories of how birds winter in the area was engaging and much appreciated.

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Getting Outdoors

This was the fourth year the Outdoor Alliance and Story County Conservation hosted a series of winter hikes. It's one way to break up cabin fever, get exercise, explore public lands and enjoy being with other adventurers. Story County Conservation Naturalist, Jerry Keys joined in on two of the hikes and enriched the experience with his knowledge of the outdoors, local history and his skills working with children.

By April, the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated cancelling the second annual wildflower walk. The evening summer walks at Doolittle Prairie were scaled down too. But, by fall, precautions were in place and with limited participation, the Outdoor Alliance and Story County Conservation held the first fall foliage walk at Soper's Mill along the South Skunk River. The winter hikes are ongoing now, and spring, summer and fall outings are planned for 2021.



Looking Ahead to 2021

The 2020 pandemic underscored the importance of family, friends and outdoor recreation. There was a surge in biking, paddling, fishing and other outdoor activities. The pandemic slowdown in our busy lives allowed us to be reminded that getting outdoors is enjoyable and good for us.

The Outdoor Alliance's goals in 2021 reflect the increasing use of public parks, trails and participation in outdoor recreation.

Outdoor Alliance Goals for 2021:

- Develop strategies to attract new members and volunteers by telling our story with community groups, Story County Conservation, Story County Partners and the media.
- Continue supporting Story County Conservation's land acquisitions financially and with service projects.
- Continue and increase water monitoring financial support as membership and fundraising allow and assist with volunteer support as the water monitoring project develops.
- Engage in other Story County projects to enhance conservation, outdoor recreation and education, including working with our partners on an accessible boat dock at Ada Hayden Park.
- Continue partnering with other formal and informal organizations to sponsor ongoing winter hikes, outdoor presentations, volunteer service and other projects.
- Raise the remaining funds needed for Story County Conservation's Tedesco Corridor Trail project.

Thanks for helping the Outdoor Alliance support Story County Conservation and our other partners' many efforts to make Story County a great place to live, work and enjoy outdoor recreation. The projects highlighted in this report could not have happened without your help.

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Outdoor Alliance of Story County Revenues & Expenses					
REVENUES	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
General Revenues	\$ 5,375	\$ 5,038	\$ 5,740	\$ 12,075	\$ 6,345
Dedicated Funds including Land Acquisition	\$ 4,088	\$ 12,594	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19,449
Grants & Other Contributions	\$ 1,692	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,000
Community Foundation Endowment Donations	\$ 850	\$ 20,639	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 250
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,004	\$ 38,271	\$ 6,040	\$ 12,375	\$ 32,044
PROJECT EXPENSES					
Story County Conservation Land Acquisition	\$ 3,410	\$ 15,722	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000
Story County Conservation Water Monitoring	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
North River Valley Park Dam Modifications	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -
Story County Conservation Kayaking Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Ada Hayden Accessible Dock	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,000
Story County Conservation Tedesco Park & Corridor Project	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ 10,456
Presentations, Ames Reads Leopold & Annual Meeting	\$ 204	\$ 360	\$ 632	\$ 608	\$ 174
Iowa Prairie Network Winter Conference	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 441	\$ 688
Story County Conservation Environmental Education	\$ 1,269	\$ 540	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ 250
Service Projects	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 199	\$ -
Community Foundation Endowment Fund Contributions	\$ 1,000	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Other Projects & Support	\$ 65	\$ 84	\$ 158	\$ 312	\$ 116
Subtotal Project Expenses	\$ 5,948	\$ 20,706	\$ 3,790	\$ 6,310	\$ 27,684
OPERATING EXPENSES					
Web Hosting and Email Service	\$ -	\$ 267	\$ -	\$ 162	\$ -
P O Box	\$ 140	\$ 166	\$ 182	\$ 204	\$ 226
Printing & Outreach Costs	\$ 317	\$ 185	\$ 59	\$ 453	\$ 24
Liability Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 828	\$ 849
Non-recurring Expenses	\$ 781	\$ 1,821	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Subtotal Operating Expenses	\$ 1,238	\$ 2,439	\$ 241	\$ 1,647	\$ 1,099
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 7,186	\$ 23,145	\$ 4,031	\$ 7,957	\$ 28,783
NET REVENUES	\$ 4,818	\$ 15,126	\$ 2,009	\$ 4,418	\$ 3,261
Outdoor Alliance of Story County Balance Sheet					
Current Assets	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Unrestricted Funds	\$ 10,242	\$ 7,026	\$ 8,739	\$ 12,075	\$ 6,345
Grants & Other Dedicated Funds	\$ 2,298	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,993
Total Current Assets	\$ 12,540	\$ 7,026	\$ 8,739	\$ 12,075	\$ 15,338
Community Foundation Endowment Assets	\$ 7,404	\$ 29,981	\$ 27,723	\$ 35,440	\$ 41,098
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 19,944	\$ 37,007	\$ 36,462	\$ 47,515	\$ 56,436

Prepared by Greg Vitale, Treasurer