

STORY COUNTY



REAP

RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION PLAN

Story County REAP Committee
Steven D. Lekwa - Chair

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Story County Resource Enhancement and Protection program is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Story County by wisely managing our natural and historic resources, providing recreational and leisure opportunities, and by educating citizens to be conscientious caretakers of our natural environment.

FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM PLAN

Introduction

The history of Iowa in the last 150 years is one that has seen dramatic changes in the natural resources of the state: 98 percent of the wetlands present in 1833 have been drained; over 85 percent of the original 7 million acres of forest have been cut; over 99 percent of the prairie acres that once covered 85 percent of the state have now been converted to other uses. Those changes have brought us the most productive agricultural system the world has ever seen, but almost all of those changes took place without a plan.

It is only now, in retrospect, that we can assess the benefits and the drawbacks of our past actions regarding natural resources.

The passage of the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act of 1989 provided an unparalleled opportunity for Iowa counties to make a concerted effort to plan for future usage and protection of natural and historic resources. Story County is pleased to take an active role in that effort. The plan that follows is an attempt to build on the resources we now have by enhancing their utility to both human and non-human users and to restore, in part, those that we may have lost. As humans seldom give perfect visions of the future, we expect to adapt and change this plan during its implementation period as new and better information, techniques, and opportunities arise.

Background

Story County established its REAP Committee in October 1989. The committee consists of 55 representatives from cities and towns, school districts, conservation groups, the conservation board, farm groups, and other recognized wildlife, environmental, historical and recreation groups.

The county is not completely new to resource planning. Previous efforts include, but are not limited to: the 1972 Recreational Open Space Survey (ROSS) Plan for the Central Iowa Regional Association of Governments; a 1973-75 analysis of the landscape features, geology, soils, vegetation, and wildlife; the 1979 Skunk River Greenbelt Conservation District Zone Plan; the Soil Survey Update of 1984; the Story County Parks, Open Space and Recreation Plan of 1989; the 1994 County Planning and Zoning update; and the City of Ames Natural Areas Inventory Project, which was completed in 1994.

Inventory

The topography of Story County is a legacy which was created by the most recent glacial period of 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. It left behind a topography that was flat to gently rolling, punctuated by numerous prairie potholes, wetlands, and dissected by the drainage patterns of several streams and the Skunk River. As the glacier withdrew to the north and tall grasslands became established, they brought Story County its most predominant natural asset--prime agricultural land. Lands that are being cultivated are located primarily on the rich uplands and on the wide, riparian flood plains. Steep lands are generally restricted to areas adjacent to stream and river valleys.

A 1975 land survey reported that 93.2 percent of Story County land is dominated by

agricultural vegetation, including 309,100 acres of row crops, 14,000 acres of open pastures, 3,500 acres of wooded pasture, 8,300 acres of farm buildings, lots, and yards, 130 acres of nurseries, 95 acres of Christmas tree plantings, and 60 acres of orchards. Another 800 acres of pre-European settlement vegetation is present, primarily as creek bottom, wetland, and some prairie remnants. Tree cover occurs in about 8.7 percent of Story County and amounts to approximately 31,000 acres. This tree cover includes some 9,500 acres of dense woodland, 8,200 acres of windbreaks and other plantings, 6,000 acres in residential areas, 6,200 acres of scattered large trees, 1,300 acres of wooded parks, 185 acres of wooded cemeteries, and 100 acres of woodlot. Large wooded areas are primarily concentrated along the valleys of the Skunk River, East Indian Creek, and the West Indian Creek.

As in most counties, wildlife habitat varies in both quantity and quality. High quality habitat is located in old fields with pioneer vegetation and long riparian areas and associated woodlands. Medium quality habitat is available along road and highway right-of-ways, pastures, and some residential areas. Areas of commercial, industrial, high-density residential, and paved recreational usage are of little use to most native wildlife species. Cultivated land, 93 percent of the county, is generally of low quality for wildlife, however, its presence enhances the quality of nearby habitat areas by providing food. Fish habitat is located primarily on human-made ponds and lakes and along stretches of the Skunk River. The unpredictability of consistent rain in central Iowa coupled with changes caused by widespread drainage results in intermittent flow of most streams and reduces their value as fish habitat.

The 2000 census reported the population of Story County at 79,981. Projections of the Iowa Department of Economic Development show accelerated population growth for the central Iowa area that includes Story County. If we are to maintain a high quality natural environment, it is essential that we protect the existing natural areas, enhance those already under protection, and seek to acquire additional natural areas. Nearly 6,000 acres are under public ownership and management, and an additional 6,000 acres have been added under the Integrated Roadside Management program. More public recreational acres will be added under this plan, and conservation district zones will be expanded. This additional acreage will more adequately serve the diverse needs of the public by providing more areas for the varied needs of the population of Story County and those from other locations that use these facilities.

Mission

The Story County REAP Committee and its constituent groups state that:

"The mission of the Story County Resource Enhance and Protection Program is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Story County by wisely managing our natural and historic resources, providing recreational and leisure opportunities, and by educating citizens to be conscientious caretakers of our natural environment."

Goals and Implementation Plans

The following goals (in bold) are intended to implement our mission. Following each goal are examples of projects that may be submitted for funding. Actual submissions may include other projects not named in this plan.

The map (see Appendix 1) summarizes this plan visually. It gives the reader an idea of the greenbelts, public park and recreational areas, conservation districts, historic sites, and trails that are in existence and planned in Story County. The map also includes trails and other features that are relevant to natural resource protection but not specifically to REAP.

Some trails, for example, are being developed under funding from the Department of Transportation's Trails Program. The County REAP Committee feels it is important to present the total picture of resource management in Story County.

1. Protect and enhance riparian greenbelt throughout Story County to create connected corridors of quality open spaces.
 - a. Develop an Indian Creek Greenbelt, including a biking/hiking trail for non-motorized traffic, from the 4-H Grounds to the southern city limits of Nevada. (City of Nevada).
 - b. Extend the Indian Creek Greenbelt and trail from Nevada to Maxwell along west Indian Creek and to Hickory Grove Park along East Indian Creek. (cities of Nevada and Maxwell, Story County Conservation Board (SCCB), and others).
 - c. Improve an existing city park by reshaping creek beds to reduce soil erosion and planting trees and shrubs to provide habitat for birds and butterflies, as well as creating an outdoor lab for the local elementary school. (City of Slater, Ballard School Board)
 - d. Add 400 acres to the existing Skunk River Greenbelt, including floodplain and upland timber. (SCCB)
 - e. Further develop public use areas, road access, forest habitat and fishery in the popular 200-acre Peterson Pits Park. (SCCB)
 - f. Increase and improve roadside management to enable greater use and production of locally collected seed sources. (SCCB)
 - g. Expand Skunk River Greenbelt from the northern Story County boarder to the southern. The area north of Ames should be designated for very low density usage while the area south of Ames could be designed for heavier usage and connecting to the Heart of Iowa Trail and the Ames Youth Sports Complex. (SCCB, City of Ames)
 - h. Expand conservation district zones or acquisition of development rights to protect other small greenbelt areas within the county. These may include, but are not limited to: Onion Creek, Clear Creek, Worle Creek, Keigly Creek, Bear Creek, and

Ballard Creek. (REAP Committee, cities of Ames, Huxley, and Cambridge, and SCCB)

- i. Connect Gateway Park, Zumwalt Trail Park, and other portions of the Worle Creek Greenbelt west to highway R38 in and adjacent to the City of Ames to preserve a wildlife corridor and open space and provide a transportation and recreational route between new residential areas and the Ames Bikeways System. (REAP Committee, City of Ames, ISU Foundation, and others)
 - j. Acquire and develop a 10-acre park. (City of Kelley)
 - k. Expand conservation district zones to protect additional greenbelt. (REAP Committee)
2. Protect and enhance right-of-ways along existing transportation routes including railroads, primary roads, and secondary roads, especially those that link isolated open space areas.
- a. Build a bike/walking path which would connect the east and west parts of Story City along the entrance corridor to the city. (City of Story City)
 - b. Develop an inner city trail for non-motorized vehicles linking the Slater city parks in a 2-mile loop. (City of Slater).
 - c. Develop the 32-mile, 412-acre abandoned railway into the Heart of Iowa Trail for conservation, education, and recreation. (SCCB, cities of Collins, Maxwell, Cambridge, Huxley, and Slater)
 - d. Continue to expand wildlife habitat improvement work along secondary roads in the county. (SCCB)
 - e. Surface the 10.5 miles of the Praeri Rail Trail for bicycles and walking. (SCCB, cities of Roland, McCallsburg, and Zearing)
 - f. Increase and improve roadside management to allow greater use of local seed sources. (SCCB)
 - g. Identify potential future railroad abandonments to be proactive in their acquisition. (SCCB and others)
 - h. Provide for non-motorized transportation within the county. This may take the form of traffic lanes wide enough to accommodate both motor vehicles and others or separate lanes parallel to the existing roadway or not. These are necessary for commuting by students within school districts and by workers commuting to places of employment in nearby communities. Examples would be widened traffic lanes between cities such as Ames and Nevada; an "artery" from

Ames to the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail and the communities of Kelley, Slater, Huxley, Cambridge, Maxwell, and Collins; and the Praeri Rail Trail.

3. Protect and enhance other open spaces, especially those involving wetland and prairie areas and existing parks.

- a. Improve an existing city park by reshaping the bed of Four-Mile Creek, establishing additional plantings, and creating a natural resource lab for the local elementary school and residents. (City of Slater)
- b. Renovate the Hickory Grove beachfront area to provide ADA accessibility to beach, docks, and fishing area. (SCCB)
- c. Develop a 7-acre parcel acquired by Story City as a city park to include picnic facilities, pathways, and prairie plots. (City of Story City)
- d. Renovate an existing city park in Cambridge by repairing restrooms and providing additional landscaping. (City of Cambridge)
- e. Plant additional trees in city parks. (All cities)
- f. Construct restrooms in city parks. (City of Gilbert)
- g. Extension of park trails from the Story City park system to those within the Story County Conservation Board's Greenbelt. (REAP Committee)
- h. Acquire and develop abandoned railroad areas to preserve a remnant prairie and provide open space. (City of Kelley and others.)
- i. Construct foot trails, picnic areas, additional landscaping and other improvements in city parks. (City of Story City and others)
- j. Improve vegetation management practices on the Kalsem, Cold, Doolittle, Larsons, Coopers, and Ketelsen marshes. (SCCB)
- k. Acquire an additional 20 acres to add to existing parcel of Doolittle Prairie. (SCCB)
- l. Acquire 700 acres of wetland and associated upland to form Teig's Marsh. (SCCB and others)

- m. Improve trails and enhance prairies and forest vegetation management in McFarland Park. (SCCB)
 - n. Improve vegetation management of the Christiansen Forest Preserve and develop additional wildlife habitat at Hickory Grove Park. (SCCB)
 - o. Develop and improve picnic facilities at Dakins Lake. (SCCB)
 - p.r. Develop desirable borrow pits and gravel pits as they become available. (SCCB)
 - q. Improve wildlife habitat on the Sheffield tract, Matheason tract, and Lekwa easement (SCCB)
 - r. Identify, inventory, and manage vegetation and its seed source and historical values in pioneer era cemeteries. (REAP Committee and others)
 - s. Seek agreements with existing railroads to improve management practices along right-of-ways to protect prairie remnants. (REAP Committee)
 - t. Restore Ames High Prairie to eliminate inappropriate vegetation and reconstruct trail to reduce erosion. (REAP Committee)
 - u. Acquire easements for additional open spaces. (REAP Committee)
 - v. Improve vegetation management practices which are consistent with each property=s mission. This includes suppression of undesirable non-native vegetation and the promotion of desirable vegetation to enhance the area=s natural character and improve its wildlife habitat value. (SCCB)
 - w. Upgrade equipment to harvest and prepare for planting seed from local natural areas to provide high quality local ecotype seed stock for restoration projects within our area. (REAP Committee)
 - x. Implement and enforce county environmental impact statements. (REAP Committee)
 - y. Acquire and develop a 10-acre park. (City of Kelley)
4. Preserve and enhance the historical resources found in Story County.
- a. Preserve historic sites and areas. (City of Ames)
 - b. Expand historical focus of interpretive programs (SCCB)
 - c. Protect and restore historic prairie and pioneer cemeteries. (REAP Committee)

- d. Conduct a county wide inventory of native American archeological sites by the state archeologist. (SCCB, cities, and others)
 - e. Conduct a county-wide inventory of historic resources to assess the condition of the county's historic record.
5. Assist landowners and land managers in protecting and enhancing soil and water quality.
- a. Reduce non-point source water pollution through planting of cover crops. (Story County Soil and Water Conservation District (Story County SWCD))
 - .b.Reduce point source water pollution problems such as those from livestock waste management. (Story County SWCD)
 - c. Implement tree planting programs and timber stand improvements. (Story County SWCD, SCCB, and others)
 - d. Encourage land conversion projects in priority watersheds, from row crop to pasture, hay land, prairie, wetlands, and forests. (Story County SWCD, REAP Committee, and others)
 - e. Reshape Four-Mile Creek bed to reduce soil erosion in Slater city park. (City of Slater) Provide assistance to landowners interested in managing prairie remnants.
6. Expand environmental education opportunities for all age groups.
- a. Continue to support acquisition and distribution of the Audubon Adventures Series classroom education materials (Audubon Society)
 - b. Expand volunteer network for programs across the county. (SCCB)
 - c. Increase the exposure to environmental topics and issues to all age groups in the county area to develop an outdoor ethic. (REAP Committee).
 - d. Promote the use of non-motorized transportation and recreation and traffic safety education. (REAP Committee, SCCB, Friends of Central Iowa Biking, and others)
7. Complete, update and publish a comprehensive inventory and a public guide of Story County natural and historic resources, including the compilation of accurate maps of trails, hunting and **non-hunting areas, endangered species, prairies, wetlands, woodlands, and savannahs.** (REAP Committee and Historic and Archeological sites)
8. Implement other plans to improve the environment of Story County.

- a. Construct a city tree nursery and greenhouse and planting programs (City of Ames)
- b. Encourage county-wide use of low pressure sodium lights to conserve energy and full cutoff fixtures to avoid light pollution. (Ames Area Amateur Astronomers, City of Ames.)
- c. Acquire an area for Off Road Vehicle use and restrict their use in other areas. (REAP Committee)
- d. Promote alternative transportation with traffic safety education, bicycling and pedestrian lanes along transportation corridors.
- e. Trail improvements - greenbelt, county parks, "connections", bridges, elevated trail and step systems, surfacing and other "hardening" techniques, land purchase or easements for trail extensions
- f. Expansion of IRVM and SCCB nursery efforts for production of local ecotype plant materials
- g. Alternate energy projects such as
 - use of solar heating at SCCB Center and other buildings
 - propane conversion of some SCCB vehicles
 - sponsor a human powered vehicles contest involving high school classes -recycling auto tires

APPENDIX 1

NATURAL RESOURCE MAP OF STORY COUNTY

APPENDIX 2

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

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6. Iowa Open Space Plan, a supplement to the 1988 SCORP. Iowa Department of Natural Resources, July 1988. 66 pp.
7. Land Use Policies. Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, Article XXIII--a Greenbelt Conservation District Zone, Nov. 30, 1988, Story County Board of Supervisors.
8. Natural Resources Analysis, Story County, Report to the Story County Board of Supervisors in Cooperation with the Iowa Agriculture Experiment Station Study. 30 pp.
9. Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1969, Story County Conservation Board, Harris and Associates, Nevada, Iowa. 40 pp.
10. Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan 1977-82, Story County Conservation Board, Mark Ackelson. 74 pp.
11. Park, Recreation. and Open Space Plan 1983-88, Story County Conservation Board. 45 pp.
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15. Status of Natural Resources in Iowa, 1984, a report to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, October 1984. 105 pp.
16. Streamside Forests and the Vital Beneficial Resources. University of Maryland and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1988. 20 pp.
17. Study Recommendations. Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Program George Butler and Associates, Ames, Iowa, and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. 35 pp.
18. Story County Development Plan 1994, Story County Planning and Zoning.
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APPENDIX 3
STORY COUNTY REAP PROJECTS

STORY COUNTY REAP PROJECTS

May 1989 - December 1999

CITY PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Recipient: Ames

FY 1990	Moore Memorial Park	\$150,000
FY 1991	Moore Memorial Park	\$150,000
FY 1995	Bentwood Park and Greenway	\$150,000
FY 1996	Central Park Greenway System	\$150,000
FY 1997	Central Park Greenway System	\$150,000
FY 2000	Ames Central Park Greenway System	\$150,000

Recipient: Cambridge

FY 1994	Outdoor Learning Laboratory	\$ 44,000
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Recipient: Collins

FY 1994	Trailside Park -Heart of Iowa Trail	\$ 49,905
FY 1995	Trailside Park	\$ 50,000

Recipient: Gilbert

FY 1997	Heritage Trails and Parkway System	\$ 49,980
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Recipient: Huxley

FY 1990	Berhow Park	\$ 75,000
FY 1992	Berhow Park - Phase II	\$ 55,340
FY 1993	Heart of Iowa Nature Trail Access	\$ 75,000
FY 1994	Heart of Iowa Nature Trail, Huxley Part	\$ 75,000

Recipient: Maxwell

FY 1998	Heart of Iowa Nature Trail	\$ 40,700
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Recipient: Nevada

FY 1996	Indian Creek Greenbelt	\$100,000
FY 2001	Indian Creek Greenbelt	\$100,000

Recipient: Slater

FY 1991	Northside Trailhead and Arboretum	\$ 58,450
FY 1998	Heart of Iowa Nature Trail Linkage	\$ 46,000

Total: \$1,719,375

Conservation Education

<u>Recipient: Story County Conservation Board</u>		
FY1996	1996 Midwest Env. Ed. Conference	\$ 1,550
Total:		\$ 1,550

County Conservation

<u>Recipient: County Special REAP Account</u>		
FY 1990	Per county allocations	\$ 9,086
FY 1991	Per county allocations	\$ 12,415
FY 1992	Per county allocations	\$ 6,121
FY 1993	Per county allocations	\$ 4,197
FY 1994	Per county allocations	\$ 4,288
FY 1995	Per county allocations	\$ 4,587
FY 1996	Per county allocations	\$ 5,527
FY 1997	Per county allocations	\$ 6,054
FY 1998	Per county allocations	\$ 5,992
FY 1999	Per county allocations	\$ 5,785
FY 2000	Per county allocations	\$ 6,695
FY 2001	Per county allocations	\$ 6,759
FY 2002	Per county allocations	\$ 6,388
FY 1990	Per population allocations	\$ 22,820
FY 1991	Per population allocations	\$ 33,716
FY 1992	Per population allocations	\$ 16,859
FY 1993	Per population allocations	\$ 13,399
FY 1994	Per population allocations	\$ 12,530
FY 1995	Per population allocations	\$ 13,365
FY 1996	Per population allocations	\$ 15,556
FY 1997	Per population allocations	\$ 17,069
FY 1998	Per population allocations	\$ 17,152
FY 1999	Per population allocations	\$ 15,882
FY 2000	Per population allocations	\$ 18,363
FY 2001	Per population allocations	\$ 18,544
FY 2002	Per population allocations	\$ 17,856
Total:		\$317,725

Historical Resource

Recipient: Ames Heritage Association & Ames Public Library

FY 1990	Ames Photographic History Collection	\$ 4,874
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Recipient: Ames Heritage Association

FY 1997	Story Center Feasibility Study	\$ 5,000
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FY 1999	Heritage Tourism Brochure	\$ 2,000
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FY 2001	Initiate Collections of Ames History	\$ 5,500
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FY 2002	Archive Equipment Acquisition	\$ 1,000
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Recipient: Iowa State University Library

FY 1996	WOI-TV Films Preservation & Access	\$ 18,000
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Recipient: Iowa State University Press

FY1993	Holding the Moment: Mid-America/Mid Ce	\$ 2,584
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Recipient: ISU Farm House Museum

FY 1991	Main floor reinforcement and leveling	\$ 12,544
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FY 1997	Assess Farm House Museum exterior	\$ 4,000
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Recipient: Nevada Community Historical Society

FY 1999	Master Plan for Evergreen Lane	\$ 2,500
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Recipient: Richard K. Peterson

FY 1991	Orchestra Pit Re-opening	\$ 4,571
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Recipient: Slater Public Library

FY 1999	Microfilm The Slater News, 1890-1963	\$ 8,975
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Recipient: University Museums

FY 1994	Loess Hills Touring Exhibit - Fragile Giants	\$ 2,816
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Total: \$ 74,364

Land Management

Recipient: State Forest Nursery

FY 1990	Energy improvements	\$ 17,282
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FY 1999	Fuel storage upgrade	\$ 24,040
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FY 1999	Replace cooler building roof	\$ 20,965
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FY 2001	Irrigation system	\$ 30,603
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Total: \$ 92,891

Open Space

<u>Recipient: Story County Treasurer</u>		
FY 1993	Local property tax reimbursement	\$ 430
FY 1995	Local property tax reimbursement	\$ 1,658
<u>Recipient: Tieg Marsh</u>		
FY 1991	Brian Johnson tract	\$ 23,000
<u>Recipient: State Forest Nursery - Ames</u>		
FY 2001	Storage cooler and renovations	\$ 56,135
Total:		\$ 81,223

Roadside Vegetation

<u>Recipient: City of Collins</u>		
FY 1993	Gateway plantings	\$ 4,600
<u>Recipient: DOT</u>		
FY 1995	Highway planting, I-35 near Ames/Roland	\$ 48,000
FY 1995	I-35 Gateway near Ames	\$120,000
<u>Recipient: Nevada</u>		
FY 1997	Roadside enhancement	\$ 800
<u>Recipient: Story City</u>		
FY 1997	Gateway plantings	\$ 6,000
<u>Recipient: Story County</u>		
FY 1992	Roadside enhancement	\$ 12,000
FY 1996	Hydro-mulcher purchase	\$ 6,000
Total:		\$197,400

Soil and Water Enhancement

Recipient: Soil and Water Conservation District

FY 1990	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 1,513
FY 1991	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 8,903
FY 1992	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 2,018
FY 1993	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 1,690
FY 1994	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 2,760
FY 1995	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 0
FY 1996	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 0
FY 1997	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 5,085
FY 1998	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 6,487
FY 1999	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 1,096
FY 2000	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 1,795
FY 2001	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 3,397
FY 2002	Equal allocations for practices	\$ 6,806
FY 1990	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 0
FY 1991	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 11,928
FY 1992	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 1,551
FY 1993	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 700
FY 1994	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 3,193
FY 1995	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 780
FY 1996	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 0
FY 1997	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 1,663
FY 1998	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 983
FY 1999	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 1,438
FY 2000	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 888
FY 2001	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 1,400
FY 2002	Forestry & native vegetation	\$ 1,727

Total: \$ 67,801

Total REAP Allocations in Story County, 1989-2000

\$2,552,329

APPENDIX 4

STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION PROJECTS PER COUNTY AND PER CAPITA ALLOCATIONS

