EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE
BOONE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

APPROVED BY THE BOONE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY
ON 03/20/2024
The Boone County Conservation District (BCCD) was established in 1964 through a special election, making it the first conservation district in the state of Illinois. The creation of the BCCD was driven by the residents’ desire to balance economic development, particularly with the construction of the Chrysler Auto Plant in 1964/65, with the preservation of the natural environment and rural character of Boone County.

Through the decades since inception the Boone County Conservation District (BCCD) has evolved to serve the residents of Boone County in the best and most efficient way possible. In its infancy the BCCD prioritized land acquisition protecting water and high-quality natural areas. In the 1980’s, an emphasis was placed on education and passive recreation development. In the 1990’s, the BCCD played an advisory role during an economic uptrend, promoting smart growth that would protect natural resources for future generations. Moving into the 21st century, the BCCD returned to its roots, protecting properties of high ecological value, emphasizing water protection and biodiversity.

The BCCD is comprised of a dedicated team of employees, volunteers, and a Board of Trustees, who are deeply rooted in the community. They live, work, and raise families in the region, and their commitment to conservation is evident in their daily efforts. The BCCD team is passionate about making their community a better place, taking considerable pride in their work, and striving to be the best conservation district in the state.

This report highlights the BCCD’s dedication to partnerships and fiscal responsibility. The BCCD excels in its ability to grow partnerships with many diverse organizations. These partnerships allow for productive sharing of knowledge and skill. In terms of fiscal responsibility, the BCCD allocates funding available in an efficient manner to enhance the mission and purpose of the organization, making meaningful impact. The BCCD relies on thoughtful planning, grants, and donations to maximize its financial resources.

The recommendations in the report focus on future planning. This includes updating land acquisition priorities, enhancing education and outreach efforts, and promoting sustainable growth and water protection. These recommendations, when implemented, will position the Boone County Conservation District as a leader in conservation of natural resources, ensuring that its efforts are impactful, sustainable, and responsive to the evolving needs of the community and the environment.

Sincerely,

Boone County Conservation District
Local Government Efficiency Committee
I. Purpose

The Boone County Conservation District formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 16th, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, et seq. (the "Committee").
II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

Anthony Phelps, Board President
David Balzer, Board Secretary
George Thomas, Board Treasurer
Meredith Williams, Trustee
Ken Hall, Trustee
David Sliktas, Resident Member
Kathryn Rudy, Resident Member
Joshua Sage, Executive Director
III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Meeting Time and Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 16th, 2024</td>
<td>603 N Appleton Rd. Belvidere IL 61008 – 4:45p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20th, 2024</td>
<td>603 N Appleton Rd. Belvidere IL 61008 – 4:30p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20th, 2024</td>
<td>603 N Appleton Rd. Belvidere IL 61008 – 4:30p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Boone County Conservation Districts website or upon request at the Boone County Conservation Districts Administrative Office.
IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Boone County Conservation District (BCCD) was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of Boone County in 1964. All Conservation Districts, including the Boone County Conservation District, are governed by the Conservation District Act, 70 ILCS 410/

Having a separate and distinct taxing body for conservation within the local community, which operates apart from general purpose governments, is extremely beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- **Appointed, non-partisan, non-compensated board.** The BCCD is governed by a board of five trustees. Trustees must reside in Boone County and are appointed by the Boone County Board. Trustees serve a five-year term, are non-partisan, and serve without compensation.

- **Accessible and focused representation.** Having a dedicated Board of Trustees to oversee the BCCD’s essential functions provides the community with increased access to the Board of Trustees and allows trustees to remain focused solely on BCCD functions. This is contrasted with general purpose governments where representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special purpose benefit is particularly advantageous when it comes to budget and finance oversight.

- **Increased transparency.** Having a dedicated unit of local government to provide conservation, education, and passive recreation services also improves the relationship between the BCCD and its residents because of the transparency and openness related to the Board of Trustees and BCCD operations. Having detailed agenda and action items allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When individual units of government are responsible for providing specified services like Conservation Districts, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are more detailed. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to more scrutiny by local officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.

- **Protection of revenues.** Because the BCCD is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for BCCD purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc.
• **Protection of assets.** Conservation areas and other real property owned by the BCCD are held in trust for the residents of Boone County and are subject to very limited exceptions. This is contrasted with general purpose units of government, which have authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.

• **Providing the community more with less.** The BCCD does more with much fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding, and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel and other numerous taxes, the BCCD’s only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident’s overall property tax bill. The BCCD’s portion of the entire Boone County property tax bill is on average 1%.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the BCCD has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

• Comprehensive Master Plan - Adopted December 2006

• Strategic Plan - Adopted July 2002

• Ordinance 76, BCCD Investment Policy – Adopted November 1999

• Ordinance 90, BCCD Ethics Ordinance – Adopted August 2005

• Ordinance 91, Rules and Regulations Governing the use of the Conservation Sites of the District - Adopted 2014

• Ordinance 98, License and Easement for Public Services - Adopted November 2007

• Ordinance 98A, License and Easement for Public Services, Long Prairie Trail - Adopted June 2016

• Ordinance 101, Ethics Ordinance – Adopted 2007

• Ordinance 109, Allow Boone County and Belvidere Law Enforcement as well as the Boone County State’s Attorney to enforce BCCD ordinances. – Adopted June 2010

• Ordinance 115, Establish Regulations for Public Participation During Conservation District Board Meetings. – Adopted July 2012

• All levy requests and budget appropriations are placed in ordinance format, approved, and filed with the Boone County Clerk.

• Employee Handbook – Adopted February 2024

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Adopted 03/20/2024
V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

1. The BCCD works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the lowest possible cost. One of the many ways the BCCD achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring conservation districts, forest preserves, park districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current memberships, partnerships, and other relationships that assist the BCCD’s mission of delivering the best possible services at the least possible cost to our community. Partnerships build healthy relationships and play a large part in sharing expertise and ideas.

2. Membership

   • Belvidere Chamber of Commerce
   • Environmental Education Association of Illinois
   • Illinois Association of Conservation Districts
   • Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts
   • Illinois Association of Park Districts
   • Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership
   • Leave No Trace
   • Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
   • Wild Ones

3. Intergovernmental Agreements with other units of local government

   • Boone County Conservation District / Village of Poplar Grove Intergovernmental Agreement Regarding Prairie Trail Crossing subdivision
   • Intergovernmental Agreement for Police Services with the City of Belvidere.
4. Partnerships with Foundations

- **Boone County Community Foundation** – This Foundation manages donations and bequests on behalf of the Boone County Conservation District. The funds from this foundation are used for capital projects that benefit the residents of Boone County. Private donations are made to these foundations and the funds are managed and disseminated on a yearly or as needed basis. This process uses the expertise of fund management to the benefit of the BCCD. Community partnering and engagement is something that is very important to the BCCD. The BCCD is a proud community member advancing and advocating for a high-quality way of life for the residents of Boone County.

- **Chums Foundation** – A Foundation whose main purpose is to assist the BCCD with capital projects and operations.

- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** – This foundation is a funding and information source for the BCCD.

- **Parks and Conservation Foundation** - This foundation supports both the Belvidere Park District and Boone County Conservation District. It acts as a pass though for grants and holds land that can be leveraged later with grant submittals.

5. Partnerships with Non-Government Organizations:

- **Belvidere YMCA** - Shared services and programming.

- **Boy Scouts of America, Blackhawk Council** - Programming and volunteer projects related to:
  - Soil & Water Conservation
  - Environmental Science
  - Fish & Wildlife Mgmt.
  - Plant Science
  - Nature Study
  - Wonders of Water, Water Issues and Usage
  - Ecosystem and Habitat Studies
  - Energy Conservation
  - Recreating Responsibly

- **Coon Creek Casters** – Programming and donations related to operations and capital.

- **Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois** - Programming and volunteer project related to:
  - Soil & Water Conservation
  - Environmental Science
  - Fish & Wildlife Mgmt.
  - Plant Science
- Nature Study
- Wonders of Water, Water Issues and Usage
- Ecosystem and Habitat Studies
- Energy Conservation
- Recreating Responsibly

- Grand Victoria Foundation – Funding source for land purchase.
- Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation – Funding source for land purchase.
- Illinois Park and Recreation Association – Information sharing on topics related to advocacy, best management practices, and risk management.
- Illinois Prescribed Fire Council – Information sharing on topics related to the safe and efficient use of prescribed fire.
- Lifescapes – An organization that recruits and advertises volunteer opportunities for the BCCD.
- Monarch Joint Venture – Information sharing, and funding source related to pollinators, with an emphasis on the Monarch Butterfly.
- Natural Land Institute – A land trust that assists the BCCD in land purchase prioritization and information sharing.
- Northern Illinois Native Seed Network – A group of land management agencies that share information and native seed to enhance local seed genetics and increase populations of species in decline.

Listed below are all the participating organizations within the network:
- Boone County Conservation District
- Byron Forest Preserve District
- Chicago Botanic Garden
- Citizens for Conservation
- Dekalb County Forest Preserve District
- DuPage County Forest Preserve District
- Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
- Fox Valley Park District
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Kane County Forest Preserve District
- Lake County Forest Preserve District
- McHenry County Conservation District
- Natural Land Institute
- Oakton College
- Saint Charles Park District
- Richardson Wildlife Refuge
• Rockford Park District
• The Land Conservancy of McHenry County
• The Nature Conservancy
• The Prairie Enthusiasts
• Village of Algonquin

• Openlands – A land trust that works with the BCCD to acquire lands that are of biological significance and priority acquisitions for the BCCD.

• Pollinator Partnership - Information sharing, data collection, and a funding source.

• Rockford Promise – An organization committed to helping young people access higher education and new experiences. The BCCD has hired Rockford Promise participants as seasonal employees in the past.

• Severson Dells Education Foundation – The lead organization for the local AmeriCorps Program. The BCCD has AmeriCorps staff assist with Natural Resource’s Management related projects every summer.

• The Nature Conservancy - Information sharing and a natural resources management funding source.

• The Workforce Connection – An organization that assists the BCCD with staff recruitment.

• Xerces Society - Information sharing and a funding source focused on pollinator species.

6. Partnerships with Government Organizations

• Belvidere Park District – Assist and support one another with projects. This involves equipment, staff, guidance, and information sharing.

• Belvidere Police Department (BPD) – The BPD completes patrols on BCCD sites throughout the year. The BCCD allows the BPD access to properties and facilities for training purposes.

• Belvidere School District 100 – Programming and information sharing.

• Belvidere Township – Assist each other with projects. This involves equipment, staff, guidance, and information sharing.

• Boone County Fire Districts #1 – Systematic communication and permitting during prescribed fire season. Information sharing regarding prescribed fire and wildfire suppression.
- Boone County Fire District #2 - Systematic communication and permitting during prescribed fire season. Information sharing regarding prescribed fire and wildfire suppression.

- Boone County Fire District #3 - Systematic communication and permitting during prescribed fire season. Information sharing regarding prescribed fire and wildfire suppression.

- Boone County Highway Department – Assist and support each other with projects. This involves equipment, staff, guidance, and information sharing.

- Boone County Historical Society - Programming and information sharing.

- Boone County Sheriff's Department – The Boone County Sheriff's Department completes patrols on BCCD sites throughout the year. The BCCD allows the Boone County Sheriff's Department access to properties and facilities for training purposes. The Boone County Sheriff's Department assists the BCCD with a safe and efficient firearm hunt qualification process.

- Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District - Programming and information sharing.

- City of Belvidere – Advisory and information sharing related to development and natural resources protection.

- City of Belvidere Fire Department - Systematic communication and permitting during prescribed fire season. Information sharing regarding prescribed fire and wildfire suppression.

- Ida Public Library - Programming and information sharing.

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
  - Advise the BCCD with its hunting programs.
  - CWD surveillance
  - Grant funding
  - Data collection and sharing
  - Information sharing
  - Guidance and support

- Illinois Department of Transportation – Information and funding source relating to recreation paths.

- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency – Prescribed fire permitting, information sharing, and a funding source.
• Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) – Data collection and sharing. The BCCD allows INHS to access BCCD properties for research.

• Illinois Nature Preserves Commission – Information sharing, guidance, and a funding source.

• Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) - Data collection and sharing. The BCCD allows ISGS to access BCCD properties for research.

• North Boone School District 200 – Programming

• Region 1 Planning Council - Information sharing and a funding source.

• Rockford Park District – Information sharing

• Illinois Central Management Services, Joint Purchasing – The BCCD uses the State of Illinois' buying power to make capital purchases.

• United States Environmental Protection Agency – Data collection and sharing.

• United States Fish and Wildlife Service - Information sharing, guidance, and a funding source.

• United States Geologic Survey – Data collection and sharing. The BCCD allows the USGS to access properties for data collection.

• University of Illinois Extension Service
  i. Master Naturalist Program - programming and volunteerism
  ii. Master Gardener Program - programming and volunteerism

• Village of Poplar Grove – Cooperation on Long Prairie Trail improvements and crossings.

• 17th Judicial Court, Probation Office – Mandated community service participants completing volunteer projects at BCCD sites and facilities.

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of volunteers. One way in which the BCCD reduces the burden on taxpayers is with volunteers. In 2023, 288 individuals volunteered 3,596.75 hours of service to the BCCD. The monetary value of this volunteer time is $111,391.35.
Youth employment. The BCCD is an employer of youth in the community. Last year, the BCCD employed eight youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Collaboration with other conservation districts on best practices. Because conservation districts are not in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs and deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

Reliance on non-tax revenue. Unlike most local governments that rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the BCCD is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, the BCCD is an economic engine for the community and generates significant revenue for our community. The BCCD does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, and school districts that received billions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the BCCD did not receive any such direct federal aid. The BCCD also does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the BCCD provides all the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from non-tax sources such as program registrations, user fees, private donations, and grants.

Third party accounting firm The BCCD contracts with a local firm completing final financial reports at the end of each month for efficiency and fraud prevention. This firm also assists in the annual audit and bi-weekly payroll. An outside firm completing these tasks helps with separation of duties adding another layer in fraud protection.

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Conservation District may be obtained by citizens in the locations listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Location(s) Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Tax Levy Ordinance</td>
<td>Website, Administration Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Budget Appropriation Ordinance</td>
<td>Website, Administration Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda and Minutes</td>
<td>Website, Administration Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comptroller's Annual Finance Report</td>
<td>Website, County Clerk, Admin Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Audit</td>
<td>Administration Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 Adopted 03/20/2024
• Statement of Receipts and Disbursements Administration Office

• Ethics Ordinances Administration Office, County Clerk

• Master Plan Administration Office

• Strategic Plan Administration Office

The BCCD offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback. These include:

• The Board of Trustees meets the third Tuesday of each month. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting.

• The BCCD's annual budget is available in tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the BCCD Board of Trustees. Additionally, at least one public meeting is held prior to final action.

• The BCCD's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the BCCD Board of Trustees in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The BCCD follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy. The BCCD's annual levy is also subject to the limitations of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law.

• Residents may contact or request information from the BCCD by phone at 815-547-7935 or email at jsage@bccdll.org or office@bccdll.org

VIII. District Awards and Recognition

The District's achievements have been recognized in numerous ways.

• October 2017 IAPD Best of the Best Award for Intergovernmental Cooperation between the BCCD, McHenry County Conservation District, McHenry County Department of Transportation, and Openlands.

• 2017 Belvidere Historical Preservation Organizational Award

• The BCCD was the first Conservation District established in Illinois on November 4th, 1964. In 2024 the BCCD will be celebrating its 60th anniversary.

• Staff Credentials:
  o Four Illinois Prescribed Burn Managers on staff.
- One Certified Park and Recreation Professional staff member, through the National Recreation and Park Association.
- Four National Wildfire Coordinating Group Wildland and Prescribed Fire trained staff members.
- Six staff members with Commercial Drivers Licenses.
- One staff member is a Certified Food Safety Manager.
- Six staff members have obtained a degree in higher education.
- All staff are first aid and CPR certified.
- Two staff members are certified Boy Scouts of America Badge Counselors.
- All education staff and camp counselors are Illinois Mandated Reporters.

### IX. Grant Awards and Donations

**April 2000 through January 2024**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Grant Source</th>
<th>Matching Funds required yes/no</th>
<th>Type of Matching funds</th>
<th>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newberg Village (land acquisition) 65.32-acres</td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Landowner contribution</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newberg Village (land acquisition) 36.65-acres</td>
<td>Landowner Donation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to ICECF grant</td>
<td>$165,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow’s Foot Marsh Study</td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In-kind services provided by the Trust For Public Land, MCCD, and BCCD</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow’s Foot Marsh Study Area (land acquisition)</td>
<td>Open Land Trust, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee River Clean-up</td>
<td>Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In Kind (volunteer help)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair Long Prairie Trail</td>
<td>Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching funds</td>
<td>$21,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend Riverfront Path System at Spencer Conservation Area</td>
<td>Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching funds</td>
<td>$51,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend Riverfront Path System at Spencer Conservation Area</td>
<td>Riverfront Development Committee of Growth Dimensions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to IDNR funds</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson’s Ford Land Acquisition, 92-acres</td>
<td>Open Land Trust, IDNR</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Land donation / matching funds</td>
<td>$285,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson’s Ford Land Acquisition, 32-acres</td>
<td>Landowner Donation/Prairie Lane Site</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Match to IDNR funds</td>
<td>$230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson’s Ford Land Acquisition</td>
<td>Land / Cash fees</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Match to IDNR funds</td>
<td>$79,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwards Park &amp; Conservation Area Land Acquisition, 26-acres</td>
<td>Landowner Donation to Park &amp; Conservation Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piscasaw Creek Fen Complex</td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching Funds</td>
<td>$340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Acquisition, 80-acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Piscasaw Creek Fen Complex</td>
<td>Grand Victoria Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching Funds</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Acquisition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piscasaw Creek Fen Complex</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching Funds</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Acquisition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piscasaw Creek Fen Complex</td>
<td>USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Cost Share</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In Kind Services</td>
<td>$38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of Invasive Plant Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Hours FY 2007</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$36,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Restoration (Distillery)</td>
<td>C-2000 Grant Program (IDNR)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% match to IDNR</td>
<td>$5,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Restoration (Distillery)</td>
<td>Habitat Restoration Program USFWS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30% match</td>
<td>$18,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Restoration (Kinnikinnick)</td>
<td>The Nature Conservancy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% match in-kind (labor)</td>
<td>$8,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Restoration (Distillery)</td>
<td>The Nature Conservancy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% match in-kind (labor)</td>
<td>$15,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Restoration (Distillery)</td>
<td>State Wildlife Grant USFWS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% cash &amp; in-kind services</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truax No-till Seeder</td>
<td>Special Funds (IDNR)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lions Shelter at Spencer</td>
<td>Belvidere Noon Lions Club</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicap accessible fishing pier &amp; parking lot</td>
<td>Coon Creek Casters/Green Giant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In-kind labor</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leopold Education Workshop for Teachers</td>
<td>Kishwaukee Chapter Pheasants Forever</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In-Kind Services</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Passenger Bus</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% match required</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Chevy Blazer</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remodel Exterior of Maintenance Building</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Maintenance Building</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% match required</td>
<td>$74,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDOT Approved Entrance off Illinois Rt. 76 at Edwards Site</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smeja Land Donation 43-acres</td>
<td>Smeja Family Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$516,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelter &amp; Parking Area @ Edwards Site</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree &amp; Shrub planting @ Edwards Site</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Police Services</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$22,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used Tractor with Front End Loader</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Hours 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$46,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter at Beaver Bluffs Conservation Area</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Road &amp; Parking Lots at Beaver Bluffs</td>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BCCD purchase gravel</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Bluffs Dog Park</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Well and Wind Tower/Pump</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Maple/Oak/Locust trees</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warming Shed at Off-Leash Dog Area</td>
<td>Eagle Scout Project</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BCCD paid for ADA parking space</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Installation of Fencing for Off-Leash Dog Area</td>
<td>Eagle Scout Project</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BCCD installed post holes with equipment</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing Materials for Off-Leash Dog Area</td>
<td>Spencer Hammer donation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$7,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Removal of Invasive Plants at Kinnikinnick Creek Nature Preserve Buffer &amp; Seed to Native Plant Materials</td>
<td>IDNR</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$45,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required yes/no</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee Valley Conservation Area 40-acres Land Acquisition</td>
<td>OLT Grant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>$192,418</td>
<td>$240,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Grant Land/Cash Funds</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>$240,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>$245,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Thunder Park &amp; Statue Land Donation</td>
<td>Jack Wolf donation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>$420,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coon Creek Caster (CCC) Shelter</td>
<td>Donation by Coon Creek Conservation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Electrical panel relocation</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee River Streambank Stabilization Project 1</td>
<td>Illinois Department of Agriculture SSRP program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% matching funds</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee River Streambank Stabilization Project 1</td>
<td>Habitat Restoration Program Grant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50% matching funds</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distillery Native Short Grass and Oak Savanna Restoration</td>
<td>Habitat Restoration Program Grant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In Kind Services</td>
<td>$33,375</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee River Streambank Stabilization Project 2</td>
<td>IDOA SSRP</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching Funds</td>
<td>$23,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee River Streambank Stabilization Project 2</td>
<td>United States Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching Funds</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee River Streambank Stabilization Project 2</td>
<td>Illinois Small Mouth Bass Alliance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Matching Funds</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required yes/no</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of Invasive Plant Materials – LIB Conservation Area</td>
<td>United States Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In Kind Services</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Trail Repairs (Kinnikinnick)</td>
<td>Chum’s Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations to Dawson’s River Road School House Project</td>
<td>Mark Dawson Memorial Donation Green Ball Proceeds</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openlands Project – 2011 Land Acquisition 467-Acres</td>
<td>Grand Victoria Foundation – Vital Lands Grant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Requires matching funds</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Openlands Project 2011 Project Land Acquisition 186-Acre Verona Property</td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to Vital Lands Grant</td>
<td>$801,810.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openlands Project 2011 Project Land Acquisition 186-Acre Verona Property</td>
<td>Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (parking, habitat restoration, and trail system)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to Clean Energy grant</td>
<td>$243,632</td>
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<tr>
<td>Openlands Project 2011 Project Land Acquisition 186-Acre Verona Property</td>
<td>Openlands (professional services)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to Clean Energy grant</td>
<td>$12,531</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2009-2010 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>2412.5 hours @ $20.25/hour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$48,853</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milt and Mary Joe Brown Project (Initiated in FY 2010) - Donation included</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Brown</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$176,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;1.5 acres of land, shelter, parking area, restroom, kiosk, path to LPT, and signage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Habitat Restoration Equipment FY 2012 – Bobcat Skid Steer with Fecon Forestry Mower Attachment</td>
<td>Chum's Foundation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$60,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleman/Zenker/Van Dyke Acquisition 97-acres of land 2011 Grant Project, purchased in 2012</td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to BCCD &amp; Grand Victoria Foundation Vital Land Grant</td>
<td>$384,994.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concrete Floor Installed in Coon Creek Casters Shelter with ADA access walk from parking area.</td>
<td>Coon Creek Casters</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>$8,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verona Properties (221-acres) &amp; Funderburg Properties (82-acres) Land Acquisition FY 2012</td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to BCCD &amp; Grand Victoria Foundation Vital Lands Grant</td>
<td>$949,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>KB Farms 82-acres</td>
<td>Funderburg Family</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Match to grants ICECF</td>
<td>$143,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Property 40-acres – Award Nov. 2012</td>
<td>Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Seeking Grand Victoria Foundation grant award (ICECF)</td>
<td>$80,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Land Donation – with P&amp;CF</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$6,500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required yes/no</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herbert/Guyer/Haselton/Hazelwood/Hardegan Acquisition – Funding to</td>
<td>Grand Victoria Foundation (GVF)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grant Awarded to Openlands November 2012</td>
<td>$1,109,185.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>match ICECF Fall 2012 Grant Award</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haselton Acquisition</td>
<td>Open Land Trust (OLT) – IDNR 2003 grant award</td>
<td></td>
<td>Haselton donation of property</td>
<td>$115,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2011 Value of Volunteer Hours:</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$53,627.00</td>
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<td>FY 2012 Value of Volunteer Hours:</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$99,277.00</td>
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<td>FY 2013 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$74,353.00</td>
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<td>FY 2014 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$79,061.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015 Parks &amp; Conservation Foundation – ICECF Stewardship Challenge</td>
<td>2015 – 2016 grant award</td>
<td>Yes, $3 for every $1 raised</td>
<td>Local fundraising</td>
<td>$19,880.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant 2016 – 2016 grant award</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015 McHenry DOT Wetland Mitigation</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$246,000.00</td>
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<td>Banks Bequest to BCCF on behalf of BCCD</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$2,000,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2015 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$76,604.00</td>
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<td>McHenry DOT Stormwater Mitigation 2016 summer installation</td>
<td>In Kind Service Canoe Launch</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Valuation of Improvements</td>
<td>$100,000.00</td>
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<td>2016 Value of Volunteer Hours – 3,309.8 hours, 971 volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$73,940.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016 – 2019 USFWS, Partners for Wildlife</td>
<td>United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</td>
<td>In-Kind</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required yes/no</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017 Value of Volunteer Hours – 3,807 hours, 785 volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$85,048.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017 Public Amenities Grants (6 grants)</td>
<td>ICECF</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$16,462.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018 Value of Volunteer Hours – 3,248.25 hours, 649 volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$80,199.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018 Belvidere Jeep Assembly Plant Donation</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luckey Woods Conservation Area 2018 Land Acquisition 24.18-acres adjacent to LPT</td>
<td>ICECF Grant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BCCD – Land/Cash Fees</td>
<td>71,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savanna Oaks Conservation Area 2018 purchase, 28.22-acres</td>
<td>ICECF Grant 80% of purchase</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BCCD – Land/Cash Fees</td>
<td>$144,400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Value of Volunteer Hours - 2,472 Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$66,472.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silberhorn Conservation Area 2018 Purchase, 25.0-acres</td>
<td>OLT (2003 grant) and GVF</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BCCD</td>
<td>$42,500.00</td>
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<td>2019 Pollinator Partnership</td>
<td>Conservation Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In-kind Match</td>
<td>$4,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinnikinnick Creek Conservation Area Savanna Restoration 2022</td>
<td>USFWS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>In-kind match</td>
<td>$26,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>2,933 Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$82,069.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021 Funderburg Conservation Area</td>
<td>ICECF</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>$250,355.00</td>
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<td>Project</td>
<td>Grant Source</td>
<td>Matching Funds required yes/no</td>
<td>Type of Matching funds</td>
<td>Grant Award, Donation, or Estimated Value of In-kind Service</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$94,179.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,041 Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023 Value of Volunteer Hours</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>$117,546.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,596 Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Grant Awards/Donations Received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>$15,717,665.70</td>
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</table>

**X. Benefits and Services**

The BCCD serves the entire community from the youngest child to the oldest adult and all ages in between. It does so in a variety of ways.

1. **Conservation Areas and Facilities**

The BCCD offered the following sites and facilities to the community last year:

- The BCCD manages twenty-six different conservation areas that are accessible to the residents of Boone County.
- The BCCD also manages seven sites that are not yet open to the public. This is due to lack of infrastructure or lack of adequate public access.
- The BCCD manages ten shelters that the public can rent for special events.
- The BCCD manages a Nature Center that is open to the public and where education programming is conducted with Boone County School Districts 100 & 200.
- The BCCD manages three historical buildings that are used in programming.

2. **Programs**

The BCCD offers the following programming. The participant numbers provided below are registrations from 2023.

- Hunt Program
- 114 Archery Hunt Participant's
  - 23 Firearm Participants

- School Programming
  - 76 School Programs in 2023
  - 1,320 Children Served.
  - 296 Adults Served.

- Summer Camp Programming
  - 5 Weeklong Summer Camp, Ages 6-11
  - 5 Weeklong Summer Camp, Two Days a Week, Ages 4-5
  - 1 Weeklong Adventure Camp, Ages 12-15
  - 202 campers served.

- Children's Programming
  - 4-H and Grange - 150 participants
  - YMCA Camp - 25 participants
  - Earth Force and Blue and Green Club - 25 participants
  - Sister Cities - 10 participants

- Adult and Family Programming
  - Library Program - 15 participants
  - Nursing Home Program - 25 participants
  - Garden Club Program - 16 participants
  - Earth Day Program - 30 participants
  - Pioneers in Conservation - 100 participants
  - Holiday Walk - 300 participants
  - Nature Journaling - 10 sessions, 10 participants
  - Museum Presentation - 25 participants
  - National Trails Day - 20 participants
  - Boone County Fair Booth
  - City Nature Challenge - 85 participants
  - Buchanan Street Stroll Booth
  - Unplug Illinois - exhibit booth and hiking program - 40 participants.
  - Hooked on Fishing - 100 participants.
  - Wildflower Walks - 70 participants

3. Volunteer and Community Engagement Opportunities

- **BCCD Board of Trustees**
  
  *Board of Trustees:*
  
  A board of five trustees appointed by the Boone County Board governs the BCCD. Trustees serve a 5-year terms without compensation.

- **Education**
  
  *Pioneer School Program & Outdoor Cooking:*
Cooking over an open fire and setting up for Living History school programs.

Education Program Volunteer:
Based on scheduling and programming needs, volunteers lead programs in their areas of expertise based on outdoor skills, living history, and natural history.

Boy Scout and Girl Scout Projects:
Habitat enhancement, trail enhancement, site amenity upgrades.

Natural Resources Management

Seed Collecting:
Collecting, sorting, and cleaning seed of native plants. This seed is used on native seeding projects on BCCD managed sites.

Brush Clearing:
Cutting and clearing invasive brush to make room for high quality native flora.

Wildlife Monitoring:
Monitoring aquatic turtle traps and bird counting at various conservation areas.

Planting:
Planting various species of trees or prairie plants across multiple conservation areas. All equipment and training will be provided.

Invasive Plant Removal:
This work includes removing seeds and plants of species that are not native to our region.

Prescribed Fire:
Assisting with prescribed burns on BCCD managed lands under the close supervision of staff.

Trail Steward:
Monitoring and caring for conservation areas with guidance from BCCD staff.

Land and Facilities Management

Trail Maintenance:
Cutting brush along trails at various conservation areas using loppers, handsaws, and clippers.

Conservation Area Clean-Up:
Litter removal and clean-up of sites after severe weather (removing downed branches, etc.)

Building Trades:
Various tasks include (but are not limited to) building birdhouses, picnic tables, shelving, etc.

Special Events:
National Trails Day, National Public Lands Day & 1800’s era Holiday Walk:
Welcoming guests to BCCD events. Assisting with parking directions and wayfinding. Sharing information about the area or event. Demonstrating a task or facilitating an activity with guest participation.

Hometown Christmas/Holiday Lights Parade:
Promote BCCD work and events. Walk in the parade to hand out candy and talk with families. A select number of individual volunteers will ride on the float.
Office

Registration & Front Desk:
Volunteers welcome guests to the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center or another event area. Providing excellent customer service, including answering phones, using the cash register, helping with cleaning, and general office tasks.

Hunting

Check in / Check out & Mentorship:
Volunteers document the hunt participants in the provided notebooks and confirm that all hunters have checked out on their designated firearm hunting dates. Mentor Volunteers meet with and support any hunters in need of partnership in the BCCD hunt Program. This includes reviewing policies and locations for hunting.

4. Ecosystem Services and Ecological Benefits

Boone County Conservation District managed properties provide a multitude of essential benefits, ranging from safeguarding the county's primary water source to promoting biodiversity, recreational activities, and overall community well-being. These lands are valuable assets that require careful management and protection to ensure the sustained health and resilience of the local environment and its residents. BCCD managed lands are providing the following services to Boone County Residents as well as the entire region:

Groundwater Recharge: BCCD managed sites play a crucial role in groundwater recharge. These sites act as natural filters, allowing rainwater to percolate into the ground, replenishing groundwater. This is vital for ensuring a sustainable and clean water supply for the residents of Boone County.

Biodiversity Conservation: BCCD managed sites contribute significantly to the preservation of local flora and fauna. By maintaining these areas as natural habitats, the BCCD helps protect endangered species, promotes biodiversity, and ensures the ecological balance of the region.

Recreational Opportunities: BCCD managed sites offer recreational spaces for the community. Residents can engage in activities such as hiking, bird watching, and nature appreciation. Access to green space has been linked to mental and physical health benefits, providing a valuable resource for the well-being of the local population.

Flood Control: Preserving natural areas helps in preventing and mitigating the impact of floods. Vegetated lands absorb excess rainwater, reducing the risk of flooding. BCCD managed sites, therefore, act as a natural buffer against extreme weather events.
Educational Resources: BCCD sites serve as living classrooms, offering opportunities for environmental education and awareness. Schools, community groups, and individuals can learn about local ecosystems, sustainable practices, and the importance of conservation through hands-on experiences in these natural settings.

Carbon Sequestration: The many habitat types that the BCCD manages contribute to carbon sequestration, helping mitigate the effects of climate change. The flora that grows within these habitats store carbon dioxide, playing a role in reducing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.

Aesthetic and Cultural Value: These natural areas enhance the overall aesthetic quality of the county. Preserving open spaces and natural landscapes contributes to the cultural identity of the community, fostering a sense of pride and connection to the environment.

Economic Benefits: BCCD sites can have indirect economic benefits. The presence of well-maintained natural areas can increase property values, attract tourists, and support local businesses catering to outdoor recreation.

Listed below are sited sources that directly tie natural land management to human health benefits.

- Pollutants in stormwater and other runoff do not always remain suspended in the water but can be taken up by plants, animals, or soil before they reach a major water body. These ecological processes can reduce contamination of aquatic habitats, drinking-water supplies, and recreational waters. The absence of adequate natural water filtration due to habitat removal or the inability of the filtering environment to cope with the volume of pollution can lead to public-health threats from harmful chemicals and disease-causing microbes. Excessive nutrients from human activities near waterways can contribute to algal blooms, which degrade fish and wildlife habitat and sometimes also produce toxins. These threats can be reduced with water treatment systems; however, this solution is not always an option due to expense or technology limitations. One well known example of promoting natural removal of contaminants as opposed to a water treatment system is that of the Catskills watershed. Faced with building a new water filtration plant that would cost at least $6 billion to build and $300 million a year to operate, New York City opted to protect the Catskills watershed which provides their water supply. An investment of $1 to $1.5 billion to purchase and restore the watershed allowed for continued purification and filtration of the City’s water resources without having to invest in upgrading the City’s filtration plant. “Eco-Health Relationship Browser.” United States Environmental Protection Agency, May 2020, https://enviroatlas.epa.gov/enviroatlas/Tools/EcoHealth_RelationshipBrowser/index.html.

30 Adopted 03/20/2024
As industry, urbanization, and use of motor vehicles have increased, so too has the level of pollution in the atmosphere. Common pollutants regulated under the U.S. Clean Air Act include particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and ozone (O3). Pollutants of concern are often chemical mixtures, such as soot. They can be indicators as well; nitrogen dioxide is a toxic molecule that is also a marker for traffic-related mixtures. Studies have shown that vegetation can remove, dilute, and displace air pollution. In heavily populated areas, even small air-quality improvements from trees, shrubs, "green walls," etc. are estimated to reduce incidence and severity of respiratory and related illnesses, as well as reduce health-care costs and days missed from work and school. Vegetation can also increase air pollution through the production of pollen, fungal spores, and volatile organic compounds, which contribute to ozone formation. “Eco-Health Browser.” United States Environmental Protection Agency, May 2020, https://enviroatlas.epa.gov/enviroatlas/Tools/EcoHealth_RelationshipBrowser/index.html.

Benefits of Natural Floodplains
Natural floodplains provide flood risk reduction benefits by slowing runoff and storing flood water. They also provide other benefits of considerable economic, social, and environmental value that are often overlooked when local land-use decisions are made.

Floodplains frequently contain wetlands and other important ecological areas which directly affect the quality of the local environment. Some of the benefits of floodplains to a functioning natural system include:
- Fish and wildlife habitat protection
- Natural flood and erosion control
- Surface water quality maintenance
- Groundwater recharge
- Biological productivity
- Higher quality recreational opportunities (fishing, bird watching, boating, etc.)

Natural Floodplains and Flood Loss Reduction: Floodplains provide numerous flood loss reduction benefits because of their unique natural functions. Rivers and streams shape floodplain topography and influence riparian habitats and riverine ecosystems. Likewise, the physical characteristics of the floodplain shape water flows and can provide flood loss reduction benefits to include the following:

Excess water storage: Except in narrow, steep valleys and areas of coastal bluffs, floodplains allow floodwaters to spread out and temporarily store excess water. This reduces flood peaks and velocities and the potential for erosion. One acre of floodplain flooded 1 foot deep holds approximately 330,000 gallons of water. Flood storage is particularly important in urban areas where even small floods, for example from a 5- or 10-year storm, can cause severe damage.

Flow rate and erosion reduction: In their natural vegetated state, floodplains slow the rate at which the incoming overland flow reaches the main water body in the
area. Vegetation also reduces shoreline erosion. In coastal areas, floodplain features such as beaches, sand bars, dunes, and wetlands act as natural barriers to dissipate waves and protect back-lying areas from flooding and erosion.

*Slowing runoff:* A natural floodplain has surface conditions favoring local ponding and flood detention, plus subsurface conditions favoring infiltration and storage. Slowing runoff across the floodplain allows additional time for the runoff to infiltrate and recharge available groundwater aquifers when there is unused storage capacity. The slowing of runoff provides the additional benefit of natural purification of water as local runoff or overbank floodwater infiltrates and percolates through the floodplain alluvium (flat land area adjacent to a stream).

Flow regulation during non-flood periods: During non-flood periods, groundwater discharge acts to naturally regulate the flow in a river or the level of a lake or pond. In other words, during periods of abundant water, the water can enter the groundwater system whenever there is available capacity rather than contribute to seasonal flood peaks. During low flow periods, the water flows from the higher groundwater system into lower surface waters, so that the frequency and duration of extremely low flows is reduced.

*Conserving Wildlife While Reducing Flood Risk:* The nation's coastal and riverine floodplains and surrounding land areas support large and diverse populations of plants and animals by providing habitat and critical sources of energy and nutrients for these organisms. Many species spend their entire lives in the habitats found in and adjacent to the floodplain. The wide variety of plants and animals supported directly or indirectly by floodplains constitutes an extremely valuable, renewable resource important for our economic welfare, aesthetic enjoyment, and physical well-being. Many communities across the country are recognizing the connection between conserving wildlife and reducing flood risk to their inhabitants and are engaging in activities that both protect important habitat and help minimize community flood loss.


5. **Other Benefits**

- Regular physical activity is essential to a healthy lifestyle. Boone County Conservation District managed sites provide residents with the opportunity to participate in many physical activities such as walking, biking, running, paddling, and exploration. Research continues to show that many people prefer exercising outdoors over indoors. Outdoor exercise has been shown to have many positive mental and physical health benefits compared to indoor exercise. Having
conservation areas in Boone County provides more opportunities for people to recreate and participate in physical activities outdoors.

- The BCCD’s impacts on the community are multi-faceted and far reaching. For example, the BCCD’s programming, and other opportunities improve the community’s overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing health care costs. After school and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. These opportunities also help reduce juvenile crime.

- General Storm Water Permit for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4). The BCCD assists the City of Belvidere and Boone County with the fulfillment of the education and outreach component of this permit.

**XI. Recommendations**

The Boone County Conservation District Committee on Local Government Efficiency makes the following recommendations in respect to increased accountability and efficiency per Illinois Statute 50 ILCS 70/:

1. **Create a Purchasing Policy/Ordinance:**
   Establish protocol to guide the BCCD’s Executive Director and staff regarding purchasing, requests for proposals, and competitive bidding. Target Completion 2024.

2. **Update the BCCD’s Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan:**
   Updating and following this plan is of utmost importance. This document prioritizes the necessary steps, making sure all Boone County residents have access to BCCD sites and programming. Target Completion 2025.

3. **Update the BCCD’s Master Plan:**
   The current plan has been used extensively over the years with great success. The time has come to develop a new set of goals and guidance for the organization. Target Completion by 2028.

4. **Update the BCCD’s Strategic Plan:**
   Just like the above-mentioned Master Plan, the Strategic Plan has been used extensively over several years and needs an update. Target Completion 2028.

5. **Intergovernmental Agreements**
   Develop formal intergovernmental agreements with partnering organizations who work directly with the BCCD on a regular basis. Two examples would be the Belvidere Park District and Boone County Sheriff. Complete as needed.
6. Update Field and Safety Manual
   The manual highlights protocol relating to best management and risk
   management practices and must be updated often. Target Completion 2026,
   then as needed.

Dated: 03/20/2024

Signed: __________________________
       Anthony Phelps, Chairman