



IOWA CHAPTER



## **The Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club – A Demonstrated History of Success**

For over 45 years, members of the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club have volunteered their time to protect the natural areas and environment of Iowa. We are proud of our successes.

The Iowa Chapter has over 6,500 members. We work on issues of statewide importance. We have eight groups that work on local issues. We are volunteer-led. Together our volunteer leaders and staff work with state agencies, the Iowa Legislature, and other environmental groups to protect Iowa's environment. We take legal action to protect Iowa's environment when it's necessary and appropriate. Through action alerts, we provide our members opportunities to contact the legislature and government decision-makers about pending environmental issues. We also endorse candidates for political office, as well as assist the candidates' campaigns.

We care about clean water, clean air, healthy ecosystems, and sustainable agriculture. We support clean, renewable energy solutions to mitigate global climate change. We have been working with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to comply with the Clean Water Act. We have been working on solutions to the problems created by concentrated animal feeding operations.

The Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club is the largest environmental non-profit in Iowa that endorses candidates, lobbies at the Capitol, and empowers volunteers to engage with elected officials.

As part of a national organization, many of our members volunteer to work on national issues and serve on national committees. We also benefit in exchanging information with members in other states.

## Leaders in Conservation & Environmental Protection

The Sierra Club empowers its members to take action to preserve, protect, and enjoy the environment. The Sierra Club directly influences legislators, the public, and the media. We help write the regulations to protect the environment and natural resources. If necessary, we take legal action to pursue our objectives. In addition, a number of our members have been appointed to government commissions, task forces, and study groups. Unlike most environmental organizations that accomplish results through the actions of their paid staff, our volunteers plan and execute the majority of our work with support from a very small staff. Our culture involves training our members as citizen-activists to build grassroots movements. Because our members reside throughout the state, we can leverage those members for greater effectiveness on issues.

### Notable Successes

Some of our most notable successes follow:

- Won a Polk County court case challenging the Department of Natural Resources' approval of the flawed nutrient management plan for Supreme Beef confinement, which would have put the Bloody Run Creek trout stream at risk of pollution from manure;
- Encouraged the Department of Natural Resources to issue beach advisories when of microcystin toxins are detected at 8 micrograms per liter;
- Successfully encouraged the Iowa Utilities Board to implement rules that would allow electric vehicle charging stations to charge customers by the kilowatt hour and ensuring that they would not be called a utility company;
- The Iowa legislature passed a bill requiring the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to establish a season on the commercial and sport trapping of turtles;
- Successfully convinced the federal Environmental Protection Agency to require the Department of Natural Resources to implement of work plan for inspecting confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and to bring them into compliance with the Clean Water Act;
- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources adopted anti-degradation rules, which will result in less pollution entering Iowa's waters;
- After issuing a notice to sue, the Iowa Chapter successfully convinced the cities of Elkader, Knoxville, Garner, and Grinnell to upgrade their sewage treatment plants;
- Defeated MidAmerican Energy's proposed expansion of nuclear power in Iowa by convincing the state Senate to deny construction-work-in-process financing;
- In collaboration with allies in South Dakota, defeated the proposed Hyperion Energy Center, a large refinery planned across the border from Sioux City;
- Convinced Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to convene a stakeholders group on sustainable funding for the DNR, which led to successful passage of the I-WILL constitutional amendment;
- Convinced the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to begin issuing fish advisories for mercury;
- Won a case before the Iowa Supreme Court ordering a concentrated animal feeding operation to install buffer strips to protect French Creek, a trout stream where the fish are able to reproduce in the wild;



- Won a case in Federal District Court requiring the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to implement the total maximum daily load program as a means to clean the pollutants from Iowa's waters;
- Persuaded the Iowa Department of Transportation to reroute highways around significant natural areas, such as Eddyville Dunes, Engeldinger Marsh, and the Hardin County Greenbelt;
- Successfully lobbied the Legislature to pass laws to notify renters of property designated as Superfund sites, to implement REAP funding for publicly owned natural areas, and the Ground Water Protection Act;
- Successfully collaborated with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to pass Federal Clean Water Act-compliant water quality standards;
- Successfully opposed construction of three proposed coal-fired power plants at Mona, Waterloo, and Marshalltown;
- Convinced the Des Moines City Council to deny support for construction of a coal-fired ethanol plant on city-owned property;
- Worked with the Department of Natural Resources to protect the bobcat and to delay the hunting/trapping season on the bobcat one additional year in order to allow the population to grow and expand its territory;
- Encouraged Iowa's two investor-owned electric utilities to improve their energy efficiency plans and to set up stakeholders' processes to review the plans each year;
- Created education materials for the air permit related to the Marshalltown power plant and organizing our members to comment on the permit;
- Successfully prevented the Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO), a generation and transmission company, from getting a waiver from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that would have allowed CIPCO and its member cooperatives to avoid purchasing the excess energy from a distributed generation project;
- Created brochures and posters about mercury contamination in fish with a focus on the Latino and Asian communities;
- Created outreach materials and encouraged our members to attend public hearings on water quality standards.



In addition, our members have been named to several boards, commissions, and task forces, including the Environmental Protection Commission, Climate Change Advisory Council subcommittees, the Legislature's Sustainable Funding Task Force, and the Legislature's deer study committee. In those arenas, we have been able to extend our knowledge and skills to advance the issues we support.



**The Iowa Chapter encourages our members to get active and to help us continue our successes.**

*Photo credits: Neila Seaman*