

**Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund
FACT SHEET
January 28, 2009**

The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund will provide a permanent and protected funding source for Iowa's natural resources to improve and protect our diverse natural environment and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Trust Fund Legislation (SJR1 and HJR1)

A proposed constitutional amendment to establish a permanent and protected source of funding dedicated for the purposes of protecting and enhancing water quality and natural areas in Iowa including parks, trails, and fish and wildlife habitat, and conserving agricultural soils. Funds shall be exclusively appropriated by law for these purposes.

- Funding for these programs would be enhanced by allocating 3/8 of one cent from sales tax revenue the *next* time the Iowa Legislature approves a sales tax increase.
- If approved by Iowa voters, the Trust Fund would provide an approximately \$150 million per year in additional funding for vital programs that sustain our quality of life, our health and our environment.

SJR1 was approved unanimously by the Senate Natural Resources Committee in the first days of the Iowa 2009 Legislative Session. Its companion bill, HJR1, just today (January 28) was unanimously passed in the House Natural Resources Committee. Now the measure must be voted on before the full Senate and the full House of Representatives.

This measure is the result of two years of research and study conducted by many of the state's leading conservation, environmental, sportsmen, and agriculture advocates, along with members of the Iowa legislature.

It is important to understand what this legislation does and what it doesn't do.

What it does:

- It ensures that IF the legislature raises the sales tax, 3/8 of a cent must be dedicated to enhancing our state's natural resources.

What it doesn't do:

- This bill does not raise taxes, nor does it give voters the ability to raise the sales tax—only the legislature can do that.
- Even if this constitutional amendment is adopted, only the legislature can approve the sales tax increase that would be needed to provide funding.

All Iowans can benefit from this crucial investment – the quality of our natural resources affects us all. This investment is about the air we breathe, the water we drink and play in, and the soil we depend on for our food.

Iowans believe it is important to support our state's natural resources. In a recent poll:

- 90% of Iowans believe that protecting the condition of Iowa's land and water is critical to keeping Iowa's economy strong.
- 86% believe that protecting Iowa's fish and wildlife benefits all Iowans.

- 77% of all Iowans support dedicating additional funding to protect Iowa's land, water, and wildlife.

Steps to Secure the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund

A vote of the people, as well as a vote of two successive legislatures, is needed.

1. The 2008 Iowa Legislature passed a joint resolution (SJR 2002) to amend the Iowa Constitution to create a natural resources and outdoor recreation trust fund, and to authorize $\frac{3}{8}$ ths of one cent of the *next* sales tax increase be designated for this fund.
2. The 2009 or 2010 Iowa Legislature must pass the same joint resolution, before the issue can be presented to Iowa voters.
3. November 2010 Election – Ballot initiative. Iowans can vote to amend Iowa's constitution and dedicate $\frac{3}{8}$ ths of one cent the *next* time a sales tax increase is approved by the Iowa Legislature in support of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund – authorizing the establishment of permanent revenue for natural resources and outdoor recreational programs. A simple majority is needed for its passage.
4. Funding would begin the next time the Iowa Legislature raises the sales tax.