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Environmental Leader, Riggs-Gelb, Receives Conservation Award

[The Iowa Environmental Council](#) is proud to announce that its executive director, Marian Riggs-Gelb, received a Garden Club of America Club Conservation Award on June 21. The Garden Club of America has 200 member clubs in 40 states and the District of Columbia and is dedicated to stimulating the knowledge and love of gardening as well as restoring, improving and protecting the quality of our environment. Gelb was recognized for her enthusiastic leadership, high ideals and endless energy in the areas of conservation, protection and enhancement of our natural resources. She has been a member of Des Moines Founders Garden Club (DMFGC) since 1998, and has served in several leadership roles.

DMFGC is a civic organization, established in 1938, which has contributed significant time and money to beautifying Des Moines. Notable past and present projects of the Club and its members include Ewing Park Lilac arboretum; the Greenwood Pond Mary Miss project; Fleur Drive and downtown streetscape beautification; ongoing landscaping and design of Gray's Lake; and a centennial project with partners to reintroduce American elm trees—a Dutch elm disease-tolerant strain—after the disease decimated this tree population in Des Moines.

In addition to her leadership at the Iowa Environmental Council and DMFGC, Gelb has been an active member of the Des Moines Park and Recreation Board for 10 years and is responsible for the creation of the Urban Conservation Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Park Board, which has been instrumental in assisting the Des Moines Parks Department and the City of Des Moines in instituting sustainable practices and management throughout their systems. These include the development of the first U.S. Green Building Council LEED certified buildings in Des Moines, infiltration based storm water management systems in the parks ([rain gardens and bioswales](#)), prairies, native plantings, [prescribed burns](#), no-mow zones, and wild life habitat rehabilitation in the park system.

Gelb has been executive director of the Iowa Environmental Council, a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization, since 2007. The Iowa Environmental Council's mission is a safe, healthy environment and sustainable future for Iowa. The organization is dedicated to giving Iowans a voice in the public policy making process, on issues that affect our water and air quality, and Iowa's precious agricultural soils. For more information visit www.iaenvironment.org.

Photo available upon request; email lynnlaws@iaenvironment.org.

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