

A healthful and supportive environment where all people of Johnson County can achieve optimal physical, mental, and social well-being.



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**Michael P. McLaughlin, PhD
Zachary J. Pollock, PharmD, MS
Tatiana Izakovic, MD, MHA
Bonnie Rubin, CLS, MBA, MHA
Peter D. Wallace, MD, MS**

Johnson County Board of Health Position Statement On Funding the Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund

Johnson County Board of Health (JCBOH) strongly support the advancement of Iowa's Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund and encourage our state legislature to enact the 3/8th cent sales tax to fund the Trust. This small increase has strong support by over 62% of Iowans. Beyond the economic growth, tourism sales, and conservation benefits the Trust Fund will provide to our State, the broad public health implications and the importance of ensuring our children and future generations of Iowans have a healthy community to grow up in is more important than ever.

Today, nearly one in every five children in Iowa is classified as obese. In addition, chronic conditions like Type 2 Diabetes, early on-set High Blood Pressure, Metabolic Syndrome, and even some cancers are presenting in children at younger and younger ages in correlation to their unhealthy weights. A shift toward a sedentary lifestyle is a major contributor to the decline in children's' health. However, thanks to Iowan's support of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, we have the opportunity to redirect the course of our children and provide a thriving environment that supports their health and well-being.

The preservation and investment to protect Iowa's green spaces, water, and air quality can be keys to improving the health of current and future Iowans. Research shows that investing in built environments such as trails, parks, and greenspace is vital to supporting a healthy lifestyle.

- A child's risk for obesity can increase by as much as 60% if they live in a neighborhood without parks, sidewalks, and other green space or recreational amenities.
- Children living in neighborhoods with easy access to outdoor recreation and green space have a higher likelihood of being physically active, achieve better grades in school, and require less disciplinary intervention.
- Nebraska reported a \$3 return on investment in direct health cost savings for every \$1 invested into trail infrastructure.
- Numerous studies prove that separation from nature is detrimental to one's physical health and mental well-being.
- Supporting the use of local government funds for walking and jogging trails is positively associated with physical activity.

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The JCBOH encourages the Iowa Legislature and Governor to work together to preserve Iowa's natural resources and recreation opportunities by taking the following action:

- Enact the 3/8th cent sales tax to fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund

The 2019 Iowa Legislatures have an opportunity to increase the health of Iowan's and leave a lasting legacy, ensuring Iowa's most precious natural resources are preserved and advanced under their leadership.

Johnson County Board of Health:
Peter Wallace, MD, MS, FAAP, Chair
Zachary Pollock, PharmD, MS
Tatiana Izakovic, MD, MHA

Michael P. McLaughlin, PhD., Vice Chair
Bonnie Rubin, CLS, MBA, MHA

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