



CONSERVING IOWA'S COLDWATER RESOURCES

Our Vision

Iowa's Coldwater rivers and streams will be complete, healthy eco-systems that improve our natural environment and enhance the lives of everyone who has the opportunity to experience these examples of our natural heritage.

Our Mission

Iowa's Coldwater Conservancy (ICC) works as a facilitator and partner in collaborations with educators, businesses, other NGOs, public agencies, and landowners on projects to protect and improve the ecosystems that sustain our coldwater rivers and streams while expanding public access to these vital and unique natural resources.

Our Goals

ICC will continue to build strategic alliances with public and private partners to generate support for the following goals over the next three years (2022-2025):



Watersheds are where it all starts

1 RESTORE HABITAT

Over the past five years, the ICC Board of Directors have collaborated with landowners, public and private organizations, and like minded individuals on numerous stream habitat improvement projects. These projects have focused on reshaping eroding stream banks and creating a stronger connection between the streams and their floodplains. During this work, natural structures using local rock and wood were strategically placed in the stream and along the reshaped banks to enhance habitat for a diversity of species and to help direct the flow of the stream away from the stream banks. Native grasses and plants were then seeded to further reduce erosion and strengthen the restructured stream banks.

During the coming years, ICC will use what we have learned from these projects to guide how we invest our human and financial resources to grow our partnerships, monitor and maintain past project sites, and begin new habitat restoration initiatives.

2 EXPAND ACCESS

ICC will continue to work closely with landowners, non-profit groups, and public agencies to expand public access opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience and enjoy our coldwater streams.

For example, since 2017, ICC has worked with other NGO's and public agencies to expand permanent, public fishing access easements on several streams that were closed to the public or only accessible through a "handshake agreement" between the landowner and the Iowa DNR. Today over 20 miles of coldwater stream with temporary handshake agreements still exist in northeast Iowa, and our work in the years ahead will continue to be focused on helping to convert more of them to permanent public access easements.



Former 'handshake agreement' site on private land converted to a permanent public fishing access easement

3 GROW OUTREACH

ICC will continue to work with our partners to advocate for and support educational/outreach programs that lead to clean water for humans and wildlife alike. For example, in July of 2021 and 2022, ICC supported programs that offered landowners and farmers "Field Days" to see improved and more sustainable land use practices on a working farm near West Union, Iowa. These new practices included ways to reduce soil erosion and to improve soil health and productivity, while also enhancing the quality of the groundwater and springs within the watersheds and tributaries of nearby coldwater streams.



ICC supported Field Week on July 20-23, 2021, an outreach program organized by NEIA RC&D and the Rodale Institute on a working farm near West Union, IA in Fayette County. This three day program, which was attended by over 100 landowners and farmers, demonstrated various regenerative agricultural practices that enrich soil health and productivity while also reducing soil erosion. Planting diverse crop types and eliminating disturbance has benefited ecosystems of a coldwater tributary of Otter Creek that flows through the farm. A stream survey by the IA DNR during the field day, showed the presence of wild brown trout.

Also in October of 2021, ICC awarded a grant to the 'Save Bloody Run Committee'. ICC joined numerous conservation partners to help this grass roots group purchase equipment and test kits for water quality testing on multiple sites within the Bloody Run Creek Watershed. This timely, collaborative support was in response to the ongoing cattle operation sited near the headwaters of Bloody Run Creek. This popular coldwater trout stream and its tributaries, which flow through fragile, karst topography, has been designated by the Iowa DNR as one of only 32 Outstanding Iowa Waters.

Our Work

LITTLE PAINT CREEK

Yellow River State Forest, IA

Before and after photos of Little Paint Creek in the Yellow River Forest in Allamakee County from the winter of 2021 and 2022 tell the story of habitat improvement work along the banks and in the stream of this gem of a coldwater spring creek in northeast Iowa. ICC partnered with the Trout and Salmon Foundation, the Driftless Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association, and the Iowa DNR to help fund in-stream habitat structures (5 rootballs and 4 rock weirs) to enhance the aquatic ecosystems on three sections of this stream, that the IA DNR has designated as an 'Iowa Outstanding Water'. The in-stream structures help direct flow of the stream away from the banks and create plunge pools, which are important habitat elements for trout and other aquatic species. The banks were seeded with warm season grasses and forbs for additional protection from erosion.



RISSMAN FARM ACCESS

Yellow River, Allamakee County, IA

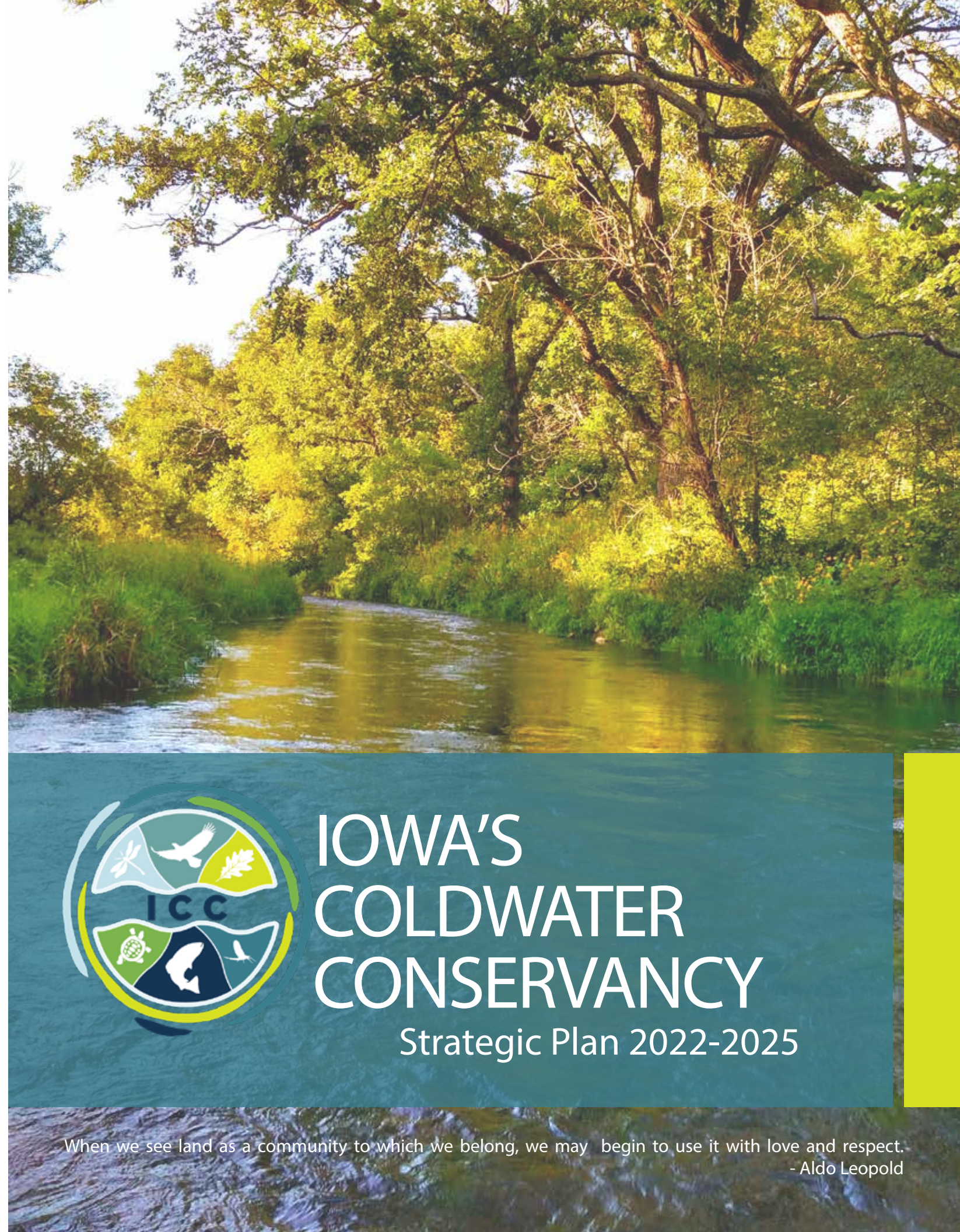
In 2019, the IA DNR purchased an angler access easement on the Yellow River in Allamakee County from the Rissman family, who have farmed the property for many generations. A stream habitat improvement project soon followed (see photo at left). In 2021, an adjacent angler access easement was purchased from the Rissmans. ICC partnered with the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association, Iowa Driftless TU, Spring Creeks TU, and North Bear TU chapters to completely fund the easement. This was the first time an angler easement was entirely funded by donations from non-profit groups. These two easements on private property are also the first two permanent public fishing access sites on the Yellow River.



**IOWA'S
COLDWATER
CONSERVANCY**

Iowa's Coldwater Conservancy logo represents some of the diverse species that enhance and sustain the ecosystems within the watersheds and riparian zones of Iowa's coldwater rivers and streams. The diversity and health of these ecosystem species are critical to the future health of these unique natural resources.

563-380-7458 | iowacoldwater.org | tom.murray@iowacoldwater.org



**IOWA'S
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Strategic Plan 2022-2025

When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.
- Aldo Leopold