



Zing star, coneflower & compass plant in bloom. (©Carl Kurtz)

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| 1946 | A small group of scientists forms the Ecologists Union, later to become The Nature Conservancy, resolving to take “direct action” to save threatened natural areas. | 1963 | The Iowa program is chartered and completes its first land acquisition, Berry Woods, a 42-acre oak, basswood and shagbark hickory woodland south of Des Moines and northwest of Indianola. The property was deeded to the Conservancy in 1961 by Don L. Berry, the late newspaper publisher and conservationist. |
| 1951 | The Conservancy is incorporated as a nonprofit organization in the District of Columbia. | 1970 | The Conservancy creates a biological inventory of the United States, adding scientific rigor to land acquisition choices. This led to the National Heritage Network, which became the national standard for information about the existence and location of natural communities. In Iowa this is known as the Iowa Natural Areas Inventory, which is now part of the Department of Natural Resources. |
| 1955 | Pioneering a key protection tool, the Conservancy makes its first land acquisition with a 60-acre purchase along the Mianus River Gorge on the New York and Connecticut border. | | <i>Continued...</i> |
| 1961 | The Conservancy embarks on its first partnership with a public agency, the Bureau of Land Management, to help preserve an important old-growth forest in California. Also, the Conservancy receives its first donated conservation easement on 60 acres of Bantam River salt marsh in Connecticut. | | |

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

- 1972 The Iowa program purchases land that became the Freda Haffner Preserve, its first conservation effort in the Little Sioux Valley region in northwestern Iowa, near Lake Okoboji. The Freda Haffner prairie glacial “kettlehole” is one of the most popular natural areas in Iowa.
- 1980 The Conservancy launches its International Conservation Program to identify conservation organizations and natural areas in Latin America that need technical and financial assistance.
- The Iowa program makes its first land acquisition in the Driftless Area in northeastern Iowa, which is home to the federally-endangered Iowa Pleistocene snail and the northern monkshood flower.
- 1983 The Iowa program makes its first acquisition in the Loess Hills prairie region near Iowa’s western border.
- 1985 The Iowa program completes its first land acquisition in the Lower Cedar Valley, an amazingly diverse part of the state.
- 1991 The Conservancy launches its Last Great Places initiative, a multinational effort to protect large-scale ecosystems by making people part of the solution.
- 1992 The Iowa program completes a plant inventory and comprehensive plan for the Loess Hills.
- 1995 The Conservancy adopts Conservation by Design, a cutting-edge scientific approach for setting conservation priorities and taking action.
- 1999 Worldwide Conservancy membership surpasses 1 million.
- 2000 The Iowa program establishes its first conservation easement with an agricultural partner, receiving the largest donated easement in Iowa’s history.
- 2002 Plant inventory complete at Lower Cedar Valley.
- 2003 The Iowa program acquires its first prairie in the Grand River Grasslands area.
- The Conservancy and NatureServe publish Conservation Priorities for freshwater biodiversity in the Upper Mississippi River basin.
- Prairie remnant inventory complete at Grand River Grasslands and the Conservancy protects 189 acres of Grand River Grasslands through a land purchase in Ringgold County. This is the Conservancy’s first land purchase in the Iowa portion of the Grand River Grasslands.
- General Mills featured a photo of the Loess Hills and a Conservancy message on the back of its Nature Valley Chewy Trail Mix Bars boxes.
- 2004 Broken Kettle Grasslands is designated as a Bird Conservation Area by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for providing critical habitat for grassland nesting birds such as northern harrier, grasshopper sparrow, bobolink, dickcissel, western meadowlark and several other species experiencing nationwide declines. The Conservancy’s 3,000 acres — the largest native prairie remaining in Iowa — serves as the core for the 10,000-acre project area.
- Watershed projects are established at Pike Run and Boone River as part of the Upper Mississippi River project.

For More Information

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