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Jan. 21 Iowa Outdoors

1 message

Press Releases from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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<DNR.Media@dnr.iowa.gov>

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Reply-To: DNR.Media@dnr.iowa.gov

To: Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards <IACCB@mycountyparks.com>



IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JANUARY 21, 2014www.iowadnr.gov | [facebook.com/iowadnr](https://www.facebook.com/iowadnr) | twitter.com/iowadnr | [pinterest.com/iowadnr](https://www.pinterest.com/iowadnr)

1. Iowa Taxpayers Increase Donations to Wildlife for Third Year Running
2. Hosts Needed for 10 State Park Campgrounds
3. Dates Set for Canoe and Kayak Schools
4. State Preserves Advisory Board Meets January 28

IOWA TAXPAYERS INCREASE DONATIONS TO WILDLIFE FOR THIRD YEAR RUNNING

Last year, more than 8,000 Iowa taxpayers helped boost wildlife conservation with donations to the Fish and Wildlife Fund on their tax form. It is the third year in a row donations to the fund have increased, a

trend that Stephanie Shepherd, DNR diversity wildlife biologist, hopes to continue in 2014.

“The number of Iowans donating to the fund is growing after a 10-year downward trend,” said Shepherd. “Those donations go directly to research and habitat development for some of Iowa’s most vulnerable animal species, so the funds are very important for natural resources.”

According to Shepherd, 8,000 Iowans donated almost \$133,000 last spring when completing their 2012 tax forms.

The Fish and Wildlife Fund, known popularly as the “Chickadee Check-off,” is a mechanism the Iowa Legislature created in the 1980s for Iowa citizens to donate to wildlife conservation on the Iowa state tax form. At its height, Iowans donated more than \$200,000 annually to the fund. According to Shepherd, one of the main reasons for the decline is the increase in electronic tax filing.

“It is easy to pass over or forget, and many tax preparers may not remember to ask whether a client wants to donate,” said Shepherd. “It may be up to the taxpayer to remind their preparer, or check out the completeness of the electronic program they are using.”

According to Shepherd, donating on the tax form is easy: simply write the amount to donate next to the Fish and Wildlife Check-Off (Line 55a on the 1040 long form) and the sum is either automatically deducted from the refund or added to the amount owed. As with all charitable contributions, the amount is deductible from next year’s taxes.

“Currently only about half a percent of Iowans donate,” said Shepherd. “Our goal in 2014 is for more people to find the check off on their electronic tax form, and to increase donations by 10 percent.”

All proceeds from the check-off support the Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Diversity program, responsible for protecting more than 1,000 fish and wildlife species in the state. Money from the Check-off helps improve wildlife habit, fund research studies, support the reintroduction of threatened or endangered species, and much more.

DNR CONTACT: Stephanie Shepherd at [515-432-2823 ext. 102](tel:515-432-2823) or stephanie.shepherd@dnr.iowa.gov

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HOSTS NEEDED FOR 10 STATE PARK CAMPGROUNDS

The opportunity to spend the summer in an Iowa state park is available for individuals who serve as campground hosts.

Campground hosts receive free camping at a designated site while they help state parks staff by assisting campers, explaining park rules, helping with registration and serving as an impromptu local tour guide. Hosts help park staff to keep the park clean and with light maintenance.

Hosts are needed for the season at Clear Lake, Geode, Lake Wapello, Nine Eagles, Pikes Peak, Pleasant Creek, Prairie Rose, Springbrook, Viking Lake and Wapsipinicon. The camping season is April 1 to October 31.

Applications are available online at www.iowadnr.gov/volunteer then click on the campground hosts link in the column on the left. Or, call [515-242-5704](tel:515-242-5704) to have an application mailed.

Applicants will have a federal criminal history and drivers' license check as part of the process.

"We would like to get hosts placed in parks by mid-March so they are ready to go in April," said Linda King, with the DNR's office of volunteer services.

Media Contact: Linda King, Office of Volunteer Services, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-242-5074](tel:515-242-5074).

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DATES SET FOR CANOE AND KAYAK SCHOOLS

DES MOINES — Naturalists, youth group leaders and others who bring people out on the water in canoes or kayaks that want to learn how to teach others about paddling efficiently and safely are encouraged to attend one of the Iowa DNR's paddling schools scheduled May through September.

Each two-day course will cover skills, hazard and river feature identification, teaching to different learning styles, and risk management. The focus will be one-third classroom and two-thirds on-water in both lake and river environments, solo and tandem. Paddling schools are set up for either canoeing or kayaking instruction. Make sure you sign up for your preferred instruction.

All courses will be taught at Briggs Woods, along the Boone River in Hamilton County. Each paddling school is limited to 10 students with two American Canoe Association certified canoe instructors. Instructors are Glenn Harmon, Todd Robertson, John Wenck and Nate Hoogeveen. Students have the options to camp, rent a cabin, or stay in Webster City at a motel while participating in the two-day school. Overnight accommodations are not included in the class fee.

Registration is required and the fee is \$25. This is not considered a novice course; students should have previous paddling experience.

The schedule for DNR's paddling school is:

- May 6, Flat-Water Essentials (lake only) Special One Day Class
- May 20-21, Canoe School

- June 25-26, Canoe School
- Aug. 20-21, Kayak School
- Sept. 17-18 Canoe School

For a registration form or to get more information, go to www.iowadnr.gov and type "2014 paddling schools" in the Site Search window; or contact Todd Robertson, DNR River Programs, 515-979-9538 or email him at todd.robertson@dnr.iowa.gov. The DNR's Paddling Schools fill up fast, so get your registration in quickly.

Media Contact: Todd Robertson, DNR River Programs, 515-979-9538,
todd.robertson@dnr.iowa.gov

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STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD MEETS JANUARY 28

DES MOINES – The State Preserves Advisory Board of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will meet at 10 a.m., Jan. 28, in the fifth floor west conference room, Wallace State Office Building, in Des Moines.

The meeting is open to the public.

Members of the State Preserves Advisory Board are Lynn Alex, Inger Lamb, Wayne Phipps, Thomas Putnam, Kirk Larsen and Leesa McNeil. The Deputy Director of the DNR is Bruce Trautman.

The following is the January 28 agenda.

- Approve Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Williams Prairie State Preserve – Transfer Ownership to Johnson County Conservation Board
- Rock Island State Preserve Seed Harvest
- Gitchie Manitou State Preserve – Staging Area for Project AWARE 2014
- Spirit Knoll – Dedication Ceremony Set of October 11
- Request for Proposals – Draft RFP for Research and Inventory
- General Discussion
- Meeting Schedule for 2014

A more detailed agenda is available on the Iowa DNR's website <http://www.iowadnr.gov/>

[InsideDNR/BoardsCommissions/StatePreservesAdvisoryBoard.aspx](#).

For more information, contact Daryl Howell at [515-281-8524](tel:515-281-8524).

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