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Nov. 4 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: NOVEMBER 4, 2014

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CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY AT MARBLE, WEST HOTTES LAKES

SPIRIT LAKE - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has begun work on lake improvement projects at Marble Lake and West Hottes Lake in Dickinson County.

Marble Lake, and nearby West Hottes Lake, will undergo a shallow lakes restoration project beginning this winter due to deteriorating water quality and habitat providing reduced benefit to fish and wildlife.

The DNR has removed many of the fishing regulations at Marble Lake ahead of this renovation.

Anglers with a valid fishing license are allowed to harvest any size or number of fish species from Marble Lake. Any number of fishing poles or jugs is allowed. Anglers must remain in sight of these lines at all times, and follow all other fishing regulations and area rules. Trot lines will be allowed (name and address must be attached), however lines may not be set across entire water body.

Nets, dynamite, poison, electric shocking devices, or any stupefying substances will not be allowed. It is illegal to sell fish or stock captured fish into public waters. Liberalized fishing regulations for will remain in effect until April 1.

The health of Marble and West Hottes lakes are extremely important to the health of Big Spirit Lake and the entire Iowa Great Lakes chain. When healthy, they are an important nursery area for fish, provide wildlife habitat, and filter nearly 20 percent of the water entering Big Spirit Lake.

The goal of the lake restoration project is to get these lakes functioning in a healthy state. The project calls for installing water pumps and three fish barriers to allow the DNR to manage the water level and to prevent carp from entering the lake and marsh to spawn.

Both lakes drain into East Hottes Lake before entering Big Spirit Lake at Buffalo Run.

The water level will be lowered beginning in November. West Hottes Lake will be drained completely while Marble Lake will maintain some water. Any fish remaining in Marble Lake will be eliminated by Mother Nature during the winter.

When the project is complete, West Hottes Lake will be a healthy marsh with large stands of bulrushes filtering nutrients from the water. Marble Lake will be managed as a shallow lake similar to nearby Diamond Lake – vegetation around the outside to remove nutrients with open water in the middle for fishing.

Marble will eventually be restocked with yellow perch, with additional game fish and small predators.

Both areas will be attractive to shorebirds and waterfowl.

The nearly \$500,000 project is a partnership between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fisheries and Wildlife Bureaus, Lakes Restoration Program, and Watershed Improvement Section; Ducks Unlimited, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Dickinson County water Quality Commission, Spirit Lake Protective Association, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. EPA.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Mike Hawkins, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [712-336-1840](tel:712-336-1840)
OR Chris LaRue, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [712-330-4543](tel:712-330-4543).**

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DNR SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON ESTABLISHING RENTAL FEES FOR NEW FACILITIES

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Parks Bureau is beginning the process of establishing rental fees for new modern family cabins at Lake Darling and Brushy Creek state parks and creating rental fees for two new categories of shelters: "large" shelters and beach cabanas.

The DNR would like to hear from the public on the proposed fees before proceeding with formal rule

making. Interested persons should go to the DNR website <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Destinations/StateParksRecAreas/ProposedRuleChanges.aspx> to review information on the proposed fees and view the cabin floor plan and shelter photos.

Input will be accepted via e-mail, regular mail or orally and should be sent to sherry.arntzen@dnr.iowa.gov; Sherry Arntzen, Iowa DNR, 502 E 9th Street, Des Moines, IA; 515/242-6233. The deadline for providing input is 4:30 p.m. CST, December 1, 2014.

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REAP FUNDING VITAL TO COLDWATER/PINE CREEK WATER QUALITY PROJECT'S SUCCESS

The Coldwater/Pine Creek Water Quality Project serves as a shining example of how a quality trout stream can respond to the enhancement of the upstream drainage with best management practices (BMPs) — supported by REAP funding and local agricultural producers.

Voted Iowa's Outstanding Watershed in 2014, the Winneshiek County watershed project illustrates how responsible land management practices can benefit everyone.

When settlers in the late 19th century built farmsteads in the Decorah area, limited technology urged them to choose sites in sheltered valleys, near waterways. Over time, the abundance of agricultural fields and livestock feedlots directly adjacent to streams caused excessive bacteria, nutrient and sediment levels that degraded the streams' water quality.

Coldwater Cave, part of an underground network of rivers and springs, allows interconnectivity of ground water between Coldwater and Pine creeks' watersheds, which were considered as one for the project. Coldwater and Pine creeks share a 40,000-acre watershed and are major tributaries to the Upper Iowa River, which serves as one of Iowa's premier recreational waterways and trout fisheries.

Initiated in 2006, a variety of techniques were implemented in the Coldwater/Pine Creek Water Quality Project to reduce bacteria, nutrient and sediment influxes. Terraces, sediment basins, grass waterways, animal waste storage systems, grade stabilization structures, nutrient management plans, heavy-use area protection, livestock exclusion, alternative watering sources, cover crops, filter strips, diversions, prescribed grazing incentives and pasture/hay-land planting were promoted and successfully implemented as best management practices.

An advisory board, made up of trusted local producers, Soil and Water Conservation District representatives, USDA-NRCS and the area DNR fisheries biologist, acted as a liaison to skeptical farmers. The approach was a huge success; some of the most initially critical voices became the project's biggest advocates.

Once locals saw practices put on the ground, 49 different producers implemented best management practices, achieving a total reduction of 6,223 tons-per-year of sediment from reaching priority streams — the equivalent of 415 dump truck loads.

“When you have that many producers buy into it, you can see the grassroots support because initial skepticism to the need and success of BMPs are replaced with adoption and continued utilization of stewardship practices that are effective and yet producer friendly,” said Winneshiek Soil and Water Conservation District watershed coordinator Corey Meyer.

Innovative, technology-driven approaches, like solar-powered water pumps, limited livestock access to stream corridors and proved landowners’ willingness to use more modern technologies.

Where livestock had been trampling stream banks, lunker hides have been installed reducing 27 tons of sediment from reaching Coldwater Creek. This unique stream-bank protection allows for a natural look to the bank, with rock support hidden under a mix of prairie grasses and forbs.

Additionally, satellite imagery and light detecting radar (LIDAR) technologies helped locate and buffer sinkholes, offering major bacterial and nutrient reduction.

Once the project began, terraces, grade stabilization structures, water and sediment basins, woodland management, stream-bank stabilization and grassed waterways were added to fit stewardship concerns from producers.

As a result of these practices, the local brown trout population exploded. The huge sediment brought on by rain and spring thaws were reduced, allowing brown trout eggs to remain uncovered in coble spawning beds until they hatch in March. Iowa DNR fish population surveys revealed brown trout numbers exceeding 2,500 fish per mile. This does not include the put-and-take rainbow trout fishery anglers have full access to 365 days a year.

REAP funding, provided through Iowa Department of Agricultural and Land Stewardship (IDALS) Water Protection Fund (WPF) grants, supported the administration of the project, bringing partners and producers together for a total investment of \$1,338,764.50 within the water quality project. These funds went towards a 75 percent cost-share with landowners to construct practices themselves or contract the work out, injecting revenue into the local economy and bolstering an important eco-tourism area.

“REAP has been essential to the enhancement of watershed projects — for the practices to be built. Cost-share funding utilizes other partnership funds and ultimately puts the practices on the ground but we couldn’t do it without REAP funding to support project administration costs. Cost-share is so limited anymore that we have to utilize every source of funding available. If we lost REAP it would be very difficult to make successful best management practices a reality. REAP is vital to what we do on a day-to-day basis,” said Meyer.

The Coldwater/Pine Creek Watershed Protection Program implemented 75.1 acres of grassed waterways (equaling a 20.8-mile long, 30-foot wide waterway), 12 manure management systems and associated plans, 138.8 acres of riparian filter strips, 35.2 acres of sinkhole-surrounding filter strips, 343 acres of cover crops and 11,095 feet of riparian corridor fencing, along with other practices, — mostly on private land — helping it win the 2014 Outstanding Watershed Award.

“Not only do the rivers, farmers and producers benefit from these practices, but it’s ultimately the citizens of Iowa who enjoy the rewards of major reinvestment into the outdoors and Iowa itself,” Meyer said.

In its 25 years, REAP has benefited every county in Iowa by supporting 14,535 projects. REAP has funded these projects with \$264 million in state investments, leveraging two to three times the amount in private, local and federal dollars.

Collectively, these projects have improved the quality of life for all Iowans with better soil and water quality; added outdoor recreation opportunities; sustained economic development; enhanced knowledge and understanding of our ecological and environmental assets, and preservation of our cultural and historic treasures.

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OUTDOOR NOTES

Prairie Chicken Update

Chad Paup, wildlife biologist for the Wildlife Bureau's Grand River Unit in southern Iowa, said he is happy to report the **greater prairie chickens** seem to be doing quite well.

"We can confidently report that we observed 10 to 12 broods this summer and the Nature Conservancy folks at the Dunn Ranch have observed 4 or 5 broods," Paup said. He said probably the biggest contributing factors to the prairie chicken success the past couple of seasons is the habitat and the drier weather in June and July.

The DNR released 105 prairie chickens collected from western Nebraska in April on the Kellerton Area in Ringgold County to increase the local population.

Cabin Season is Here

Looking for a getaway surrounded by Iowa's late fall beauty that won't cost an arm and a leg? Rent a **cabin in a state park**.

Go online to iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com to see what's available where and what the cabins have to offer. There are many weekend dates available.

Trout are on the Way

The DNR releases 1,000 to 2,000 rainbow trout at select locations as part of its **cool weather trout program** that brings trout to areas that cannot support them during the summer months.

Trout will be released at 1 p.m., Nov. 5 in Moorland Pond, Fort Dodge; at noon, Nov. 8 in Scharnberg Pond, Spencer; at 2 p.m., Nov. 12 in Bacon Creek, Sioux City; at 10 a.m., Nov. 14 in Prairie Creek Park (Cedar Bend), Cedar Rapids; at noon, Nov. 20 in Ada Hayden, Ames; at 1 p.m., Nov. 21 in North Prairie, Cedar Falls; and 11 a.m., Nov. 26 in Blue Pit, Mason City.

Anglers will need to have a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10.

Harvest Update

The latest crop report from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship showed 61 percent of corn and 91 percent of soybean harvest has been complete. That's **good news for pheasant hunters**.

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