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June 10 Iowa Outdoors

1 message

Press Releases from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 10, 2014

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1. Buckeye Creek Watershed Project Success Benefits Wapello County
2. Iowa Pheasants Faced Tough Winter, Wet Spring
3. Fishing Regulations Relaxed at Q Pond

[Photos are available by sending an email to julie.sparks@dnr.iowa.gov]

REAP: 25 Years of Enhancing and Protecting Iowa's Resources

BUCKEYE CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT SUCCESS BENEFITS WAPELLO COUNTY

The success of the Buckeye Creek Water Quality Improvement and Flood Reduction Project in Wapello County underscores just how beneficial environmentally responsible land practices can be in Iowa.

The REAP-funded watershed project reduces sediment flow into Buckeye Creek by more than 8,700 tons annually through more than nine miles of locally contracted, farmable, broad-based, tile-intake terraces and 17 grade stabilization structure "ponds" that permeate the 10,800-acre watershed.

REAP funding, through a Water Protection Fund grant from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, along with other state and federal funds, allowed 60 of the 79 landowners to participate. By investing their own funds to pay for at least 25 percent of the cost, they were able to reduce erosion of precious topsoil.

"Not only are you getting the environmental benefit, but it saves the county money on road costs," said project coordinator Ryan Rasmussen. The area is no longer a concern for road flooding, grader ditches silting full, or deteriorating bridges due to high water.

The combination of terraces and grade stabilization structures has reduced area flooding dramatically.

Commissioner Neil McMullin recalled on April 17 when the Buckeye Creek watershed had to deal with eight inches of rain in just six hours.

"The new system of terraces and grade stabilization structures managed Mother Nature just as they were intended. Less than two feet of water made it to the emergency overflow area of the 23-acre structure that swelled to capacity," McMullin said.

Buckeye Creek was named Iowa's Watershed of the Year in 2011 by the Conservation Districts of Iowa, topping 41 other Iowa watersheds.

Tile-intake terraces were constructed by pushing soil from the farm field into earthen berms, helping to prevent water from channelizing as it moves down hillsides and cutting through the earth causing erosion and the loss of topsoil.

Longer field slopes increase water speed and soil erosion; however, terraces can intersect these slopes and shorten their length resulting in less soil being lost.

Terraces intercept the water allowing it to pool where larger soil particles drop out before the water exits underground through tile. Terrace benefits include reducing the flow of sediment into grade stabilization structures and other water bodies by 75 percent, substantially increasing their lifespan, and protecting water quality.

Four landowners were partners in the construction of Buckeye Creek's primary grade stabilization structure which has a 23-acre pool and collects the drainage from 1,408 acres. Constructing earthen dams across ditches in low-lying areas create structures such as the one in this project that trap 90 percent of sediment caused by runoff.

All ground above these structures drains into them, where sediment settles at the bottom and stays. The structures also store additional water during heavy rainfall, letting un-silted water out at a controlled pace and thereby significantly reducing flood damage to roads and farmland in the area. The project's 17 grade stabilization structures range in drainage areas from 10 to 1,400 acres.

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 preserved our cultural and historic treasures.

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IOWA PHEASANTS FACED TOUGH WINTER, WET SPRING

Iowa's unseasonably cold and snowy winter and wet spring is not likely to boost its pheasant population.

Pheasants typically show population increases following mild winters with spring that are warmer and dryer than normal. Based on that weather model, the western third of Iowa has the best chance to see an uptick in pheasants due to below average snow fall and less than eight inches of spring rain.

The weather model predicts the rest of the state to see either no population increase or fewer birds than last year. The nesting forecast will be updated by the August roadside survey, which is the best gauge of what pheasant hunters can expect to find in the fall.

Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, said while the weather is not what upland bird hunters had hoped for, there is some progress on pheasant habitat. Landowners began enrolling in continuous CRP on Monday.

"This is great news for Iowa's new pheasant recovery continuous CRP practice designed specifically to help recover pheasant numbers," Bogenschutz said. Iowa has 45,000 acres available on a first come, first served basis.

"There will not be a general CRP signup this year so this is an option that landowners with expiring general CRP should consider," he said.

Information on Iowa's pheasant recovery continuous CRP is available online at www.iowadnr.gov/habitat.

MEDIA CONTACT: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-432-2823 ext 111.

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FISHING REGULATIONS RELAXED AT Q POND

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources relaxed fishing regulations at Q Pond in Osceola on June 6, to allow anglers to more freely harvest and utilize fish ahead of the anticipated loss of Q Pond's water level.

The lake's water level is lowering do to a leak in the drain pipe. The amount of water the lake will lose is not known, but if the level of the lake reaches the location of the leak, 10 feet or more of water depth could be lost. A water level loss to this extent will decrease the number of fish able to survive in the lake and increase the chances for a winter kill.

The lake's water level will be allowed to stabilize. Once the lake level is stabilized, an evaluation of the outlet structure will be done, and a plan will be developed to address the leak. Users should expect limited access to the lake.

Anglers with a valid fishing license will be allowed to harvest any size or number of largemouth bass, channel catfish, and all other fish species from Q Pond. Any number of fishing poles or jug fishing will be 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. It is illegal to sell fish or stock captured fish into public waters. All navigation rules still apply.

Liberalized fishing regulations for Q Pond will be in effect from June 6 through March 1, 2015. Specific regulation changes include:

- Removal of bag and length limit restrictions on largemouth bass
- Removal of bag limit on channel catfish
- Removal of bag limit on crappie and bluegill
- Removal of the two line/two hook fishing restriction, however anglers must still adhere to the being within visual sight of the lines

For more information contact the Iowa DNR Fisheries Biologist Andy Jansen at [641-464-3108](tel:641-464-3108) or Iowa DNR Conservation Officer Michael Miller at [641-414-2174](tel:641-414-2174).

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