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**June 17 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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 17, 2014**[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov) | [facebook.com/iowadnr](https://www.facebook.com/iowadnr) | [twitter.com/iowadnr](https://twitter.com/iowadnr) | [pinterest.com/iowadnr](https://www.pinterest.com/iowadnr)

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## STATE PARKS POPULAR CHOICE FOR JULY 4 HOLIDAY

Most of the campsites with electricity in Iowa's state parks were reserved early for the July 4 holiday, but procrastinators still have a few options.

As of Tuesday morning, 43 campsites with electricity in eight state parks are available for reservation. Sites are available in Elinor Bedell, Elk Rock (equestrian), Honey Creek south campground, Lake Keomah, Lake Wapello, Pilot Knob, Red Haw and Walnut Woods state parks.

Campers choosing one of the non reservable sites should plan to arrive early.

Information on Iowa state parks is available at [www.iowadnr.gov/parks](http://www.iowadnr.gov/parks). Reservations are available at [iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com](http://iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com).

## CAMPGROUND ETIQUETTE

- Be a good neighbor. Observe quiet hours and pick up after yourself
- Don't burn trash – only firewood
- Keep pets on a leash and don't leave them unattended
- Get firewood locally to avoid transporting pests.
- Don't bring fireworks

## CAMPING TIPS

- Keep track of the weather and have a plan in case of severe weather
- Plan to arrive as early in the day to set up the site, look for potential problems and avoid those areas
- Prepare ingredients for meals before leaving home for less time cooking and more time playing
- Bug spray, sun screen and a basic first-aid kit are must haves
- Check the registration kiosk for activities in the area

## FIREWOOD

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship requires all firewood sold or acquired in Iowa to have the county and state of harvest location on the label of packages and the delivery ticket for bulk firewood. The rules were added to prevent the spread of invasive species.

The rules only apply to firewood sold and acquired in Iowa.

The rule also requires the Iowa DNR to collect firewood from campers that does not have a label.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Jim Lawson, District Supervisor, State Parks Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-281-5972](tel:515-281-5972).**

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## CAUTION ADVISED AS PEAK BOATING SEASON APPROACHES

Heading toward the peak of Iowa's boating season; boaters and other on the water recreationists are urged to observe safety first, on or near their favorite lake or stream.

Traditionally, the 4th of July weekend is the busiest period on Iowa waters. Boating, paddling, fishing and swimming are even more popular with what are often the warmest temperatures of the year. Before you set out, though, help make sure everybody stays safe.

"We urge boaters...including passengers...to remain alert to activity around them," advises Susan Stocker, boating law administrator for the Department of Natural Resources. "Don't overload your craft. The U.S. Coast Guard, along with manufacturers, determines the capacity of each boat and it is visible on virtually all boats."

Operators can brush up on rules and regulations, by taking the DNR boating safety course. Iowa law requires any person 12-17 years old, who will operate a motorboat over ten horsepower or a personal watercraft, to successfully complete the education program. It is available online at [www.iowadnr.gov/Recreation/Boating/BoaterEducation.aspx](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Recreation/Boating/BoaterEducation.aspx)

Stocker reminds everyone on board that they need a properly fitted lifejacket. Safety officials also urge you to WEAR it.

"It is similar to seat belts on the road. You won't have time to grab it and put it on, when facing an emergency situation," she said.

Other lake or river enthusiasts--from paddlers and anglers to swimmers--can avoid problems, too, by wearing a lifejacket, especially during heavy periods of boat traffic.

"With the variety of activities out there, a life jacket provides added safety while you are enjoying yourself," said Stocker.

The effects of sun, waves and wind over a day on the water are tiring; especially if alcohol is involved.

"Alcohol has a dehydration effect. It can impede judgment," warns Stocker. "Last year, 65 percent of Iowa's boating fatalities involved alcohol. Boating while intoxicated is against the law. A sober designated boat operator is vital on board."

In Iowa, there are more than 235,000 registered boats. Many of them will be out over the coming weekends. With everyone aware, everyone stays safe on the water.

### Boating Tips

- Don't drink and operate a boat

- Take a boating safety course
- Always wear a lifejacket – it can't work if it's not on
  - Have a throwable floatation device on board
- Review boating laws
  - Remember, youth under age 13 are required to wear a lifejacket while the boat is underway
- Have patience and be courteous on the ramp and water
- Get a weather forecast before heading out
- Keep watch for other boaters, swimmers, skiers, debris or other obstacles in the water
  - Have a fully charged, usable fire extinguisher
  - Maintain your boat trailer [lights, wheel bearings, tires]
  - Have a working horn or whistle
  - Prepare your boat in the rigging lane prior to launching
  - Don't operate in a careless or reckless manner
  - Don't violate buoys, as they are the road signs of the water

**MEDIA CONTACT: Susan Stocker, Boating Law Administrator and Education Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-281-0122](tel:515-281-0122) or [515-313-6439](tel:515-313-6439).**

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## OPERATION DRY WATER STARTS JUNE 27

DES MOINES - A group of state, federal and local law enforcement agencies will partner again to focus enforcement of Iowa's boating while intoxicated law as part of the national Operation Dry Water campaign to draw public attention to the hazards of boating under the influence.

"We will conduct boating while intoxicated focused enforcement with increased patrols, check points, and be administering breath tests and working to inform the public on the hazards involved on the waters across Iowa," said Susan Stocker, boating law administrator and education coordinator for the Iowa DNR.

Operation Dry Water is June 27-29.

"More than 66 percent of Iowa's boating fatalities involved alcohol in 2013 and many of those victims were innocent bystanders," she said.

"The effects of alcohol can be intensified when combined with wind and wave action and an extended time spent in the sun. Operators may not think they are under the influence, but their judgment, reaction

time, balance and vision indicate that they are," Stocker said.

In 2013, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and its partners contacted more than 426 vessels containing 1,613 boaters resulting in 90 citations or warnings as part of Operation Dry Water. The 2013 effort was conducted on the, Coralville Reservoir, Saylorville Reservoir, Lake Rathbun, Lake Red Rock, Okoboji, and the Missouri River.

The DNR has partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers, and local sheriff's department as part of previous Operation Dry Water campaigns.

### **2013 TOP AREAS FOR BWI ARRESTS**

Saylorville Lake: 18

Coralville: 13

Mississippi River: 9

Okoboji: 4

Missouri River: 4

Total BWI: 56

### **2012 TOP AREAS FOR BWI ARRESTS**

Mississippi River: 32

Saylorville Lake: 16

Okoboji: 15

Coralville: 14

Clear Lake: 6

Total BWI: 95

### **2011 TOP AREAS FOR BWI ARRESTS: [July 1, BAC dropped from .10% to .08%]**

Mississippi River: 19

Coralville Reservoir: 13

Saylorville Lake: 13

Okoboji: 4

Clear Lake: 3

Total BWI: 55

**2010 TOP AREAS FOR BWI ARRESTS:**

Mississippi River: 10

Saylorville Lake: 6

Coralville Reservoir: 5

Missouri River: 4

Clear Lake: 3

Total BWI: 40

**2009 TOP AREAS FOR BWI ARREST:**

Okoboji: 7

Missouri River: 6

Mississippi River: 5

Saylorville Lake: 5

Clear Lake: 2

Total BWI: 32

**MEDIA CONTACT: Susan Stocker, Boating Law Administrator and Education Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [515-281-0122](tel:515-281-0122) or [515-313-6439](tel:515-313-6439).**

**2014 BRASS BLUEGILL AWARD AND BRASS BLUEGILL**

## MERITORIOUS AWARDS

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Aquatic Education Program recently honored three individuals for their efforts in helping Iowa's youth become skilled anglers and advocates of fishing and natural resources conservation.

Mat Daniels, social studies and science teacher at Kanesville Alternative Learning Center, Laura DeCook, naturalist with Mahaska County Conservation Board, and Greg Wolf, naturalist with the Davenport Parks and Recreation, were recognized during the Natural Resource Commission meeting on June 12 for establishing outstanding *Fish Iowa!* programs.

Daniels, who has been involved with *Fish Iowa!* for four years, received the 2014 *Brass Bluegill Award*. He works with 150 students each year and uses the *Fish Iowa!* curriculum with at-risk students in the Passages Program. Daniels applied for and was granted *Fish Iowa!* as a curricular choice at his school. It is a nine week course and upon completion students get an elective "*Fish Iowa!*" credit on their transcript.

"I believe that fishing is something students can take with them forever," Daniels said.

DeCook and Wolf were recipients of *Brass Bluegill Meritorious* award.

DeCook has been involved with *Fish Iowa!* for 18 years. She has coordinated fishing and aquatic programs for school field trips, public fishing events, and youth day camps. She also instructs in-class programs relating to aquatics and fishing. Always an advocate of the *Fish Iowa!* curriculum, DeCook trains and mentors teachers and naturalists wishing to become involved in *Fish Iowa!*

Wolf, a 12-year veteran of *Fish Iowa!*, started the "*Family Learn-How-To-Fish Day*" in Davenport that encourages families to discover the excitement of fishing in an urban city. The event is held at Vander Veer Botanical Park Lagoon. Several stations are set up for families to learn different aspects of fishing including: fly tying, casting, water safety and pole maintenance, among others. Families are also allowed to fish in the lagoon.

All three recipients began fishing at a young age with family members. Their early exposure to the outdoors stirred a lifelong passion that all three have chosen to share with Iowa's youth. While all three awardees have different programs, they share a commonality of passion for the sport of fishing, and a true desire to see today's youth given a chance carry on the tradition. Their programs ensure that children will have the chance and opportunity to explore nature, develop a love of the outdoors, and make memories that will last a lifetime.

*Fish Iowa!* strives to create safe anglers and responsible stewards of Iowa's aquatic resources. *Fish Iowa!* is supported by Sportfish Restoration Funds, which are obtained from excise taxes paid on fishing tackle and related items and fishing license dollars.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Barb Gigar, Education and Outreach, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [641-747-2200](tel:641-747-2200).**

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