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July 29 Iowa Outdoors

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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: JULY 29, 2014

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WILSON ISLAND TO REOPEN AUGUST 4

MISSOURI VALLEY - Wilson Island State Recreation Area north of Council Bluffs will open its gates at 8 a.m., Aug. 4, more than five weeks after its initial planned re-opening was delayed by June storms and flooding that caused additional damage to the popular western Iowa park.

The campground has been closed since it was flooded in 2011.

The three-year, \$2.5-\$3 million cleanup and rebuild project enters the home stretch as workers are installing fire rings at campsites and the picnic/shelter areas and setting out about 200 picnic tables.

"We have a few more things on the to-do list but we're getting there," said Park Ranger Chris Anunson.

The campground remodel includes eliminating the more flood prone sites and changing the first to flood electric sites to non electric. The number of electrical sites increased by 15 but the total number of campsites has been reduced by 10.

The new Wilson Island will have 50 amp service electrical sites, a new shower house, two new dump stations, two new picnic shelters all at higher elevations, and a new park office.

Damage from the June 3 storm that battered Wilson Island with four inches of rain, baseball sized hail and 80-90 mile per hour winds will still be visible on park buildings, Anunson said.

The newly constructed park office had 11 windows broken, and extensive damage to its siding and metal roof.

"The park is still a work in progress but we've come a long way," Anunson said.

MEDIA CONTACT: Chris Anunson, Park Ranger, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-642-2069.

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DNR BUILDING A POPULAR STOP AT THE IOWA STATE FAIR

Located at the west end of the State Fair Grand Concourse, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources historic aquarium, pavilion and courtyard is a must-see for thousands of fair-goers each year.

Built in 1921, the wrap-around aquarium is the focal point of the pavilion, filled with Iowa fish of all shapes, sizes and species. Throughout the building, park rangers, conservation officers, environmental specialists, biologists and other staffers are on hand to field visitors' questions and maybe ask a few too.

Visitors of all ages can test their knowledge of state parks' trivia or challenge other visitors to a game of environmental Jeopardy. Fair-goers can also test their skills at the new air rifle range, or maybe spot a cougar, bobcat or wolf mount, or full-size replica of an eagle's nest. Licenses and *Iowa Outdoors* magazine subscriptions are on sale, too.

On the west side of the pavilion are gates designed and created by sculptor David Williamson and past fair visitors, using metal trash collected from Iowa's annual river clean-up, Project AWARE. The gates lead to the DNR's courtyard, a relaxing oasis complete with a pond of waterfowl and turtles, a prairie, a

stream, the world's largest birdhouse, a water bottle filling station, picnic tables, benches and plenty of shade.

The mobile education exhibits along the north courtyard fence helps visitors learn how to make simple, everyday changes to help protect and improve the environment.

Three to five presentations are made daily on the courtyard stage including cooking demonstrations and live animal talk. And each Friday, Saturday and Sunday during the Fair will be dedicated to special theme days in the courtyard. For a list of courtyard theme days and daily stage presentations visit www.iowadnr.gov/fair

The DNR's pavilion and aquarium are open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, throughout the fair.

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2014 IOWA HUNTING SEASONS RELEASED

Iowa deer hunters will notice fewer seasons and changes in certain seasons this year.

The January antlerless deer season has been eliminated, the number of antlerless deer tags has been reduced and hunters in 27 northwest counties are allowed only antlered deer during the first shotgun and early muzzleloader seasons.

Crossbows were allowed as a legal method of take for resident Iowa hunters during the late muzzleloader season.

Iowa waterfowl hunters have an experimental September teal only season from Sept. 6-21 in all three waterfowl zones.

The remaining waterfowl seasons will be set during the August 14 meeting of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Natural Resource Commission after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issues their season requirements to the states.

Iowa Hunting and Trapping Seasons

Deer Seasons

Youth: Sept. 20-Oct. 5

Disabled Hunter: Sept. 20-Oct. 5

Archery: Oct. 1-Dec. 5 AND Dec. 22-Jan. 10

Early Muzzleloader: Oct. 11-19

Late Muzzleloader: Dec. 22-Jan. 10

First Shotgun: Dec. 6-10

Second Shotgun: Dec. 13-21

Nonresident Holiday: Dec. 24-Jan. 2

Small Game and Upland Seasons

Youth Rooster Pheasant: Oct. 18-19

Rooster Pheasant: Oct. 25-Jan. 10

Bobwhite Quail: Oct. 25-Jan. 31

Gray Partridge: Oct. 11-Jan. 31

Ruffed Grouse: Oct. 4-Jan. 31

Cottontail Rabbit: Aug. 30-Feb. 28

Fox and Gray Squirrel: Aug. 30-Jan. 31

Crow: Oct. 15-Nov. 30 AND Jan. 14-March 31

Pigeon: Continuous Open Season

Migratory Game Bird Seasons

Mourning Dove: Sept. 1-Nov. 9

September Teal Season: Sept. 6-21 in all three zones. Additional regulations apply.

Furbearer Hunting Seasons

Raccoon: Nov. 1-Jan. 31

Opossum: Nov. 1-Jan. 31

Red and Gray Fox: Nov. 1-Jan. 31

Bobcat: Nov. 1-Jan. 31 Additional regulations apply.

Coyote: Continuous Open Season

Groundhog: Continuous Open Season

Trapping Seasons

Raccoon: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Muskrat: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Red and Gray Fox: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Coyote: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Badger: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Mink: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Weasel: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Opossum: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Striped Skunk: Nov.1-Jan. 31

Beaver: Nov. 1-April 15

Otter: Nov.1-Jan. 31 Additional regulations apply.

Bobcat: Nov.1-Jan. 31 Additional regulations apply.

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OSPREY NESTING IN IOWA

Six ospreys from Minnesota will call Iowa home for the near future at two locations as part of an ongoing effort to increase the population of the raptor in its native range.

Three ospreys were placed at Calvary Baptist Camp on the north shore of Clear Lake that will be released from their protective shelter, or hack box, in the coming days.

At Swan Lake, the Carroll County Conservation Board and volunteers with Saving Our Avian Resources will place three ospreys in the coming days. Their release will occur in a few weeks.

Young ospreys can tear apart fish on their own at 42-days old and can be relocated to new habitat. Young will take flight when they are approximately 54-days old. The adults will supplement their diet for a few weeks until self-sufficiency is achieved.

Ospreys return to nest where they learn to fly and to forage for fish when three or four years of age.

ALLETE, an energy company based in Duluth, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources provided the ospreys.

Ospreys by the Numbers

- The program began in 1997.
- 253 have been released at 12 sites.
- Iowa's first successful nesting was in 2003.
- 141 wild ospreys have been produced at 78 successful nests since 2003.
- There have been 21 nest attempts reported in 2014.

MEDIA CONTACT: Pat Schlarbaum, Wildlife Diversity Technician, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-432-2823 ext 104, or 712-330-0526.

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GRAZING GOATS

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

No doubt about it; 60 grazing goats make a huge dent in an overgrown creek corridor. Two weeks after being turned loose in Ensign Hollow state wildlife area, they have chewed their way through over three acres of giant ragweed, stinging nettles, wild parsnip, poison ivy and just about anything else a land manager does NOT want to see.

It's opening the eyes of public and private landowners.

"How could a landowner NOT like this? It has too many positives!" queried Eric Boehm, who owns land near Bear Creek, another Clayton County trout stream. Boehm and other landowners, USDA workers and DNR biologists recently checked the progress of the goat experiment.

The results are impressive. On one side of a temporary electric fence, nettles, ragweed and other thick vegetation stood head-high. On the goats' side, it looked like a heavily grazed farm timber. Larger trees had not been on the menu, and much of the grass had been ignored. In between, though, the undesirable woody vegetation—willow shoots, box elder, buckthorn—was pretty well chewed on...and just stems remained of broadleaf stands; particularly nettles and ragweed.

"You really don't want to walk through all that stuff," said DNR fisheries supervisor Mike Steuck; who led the informal tour. "We are trying to open up this area, so folks who want to fish, hunt, trap, bird watch or hike can get through more effectively."

The area is best known among trout anglers. Rolling through with 60 degree water on this 85 degree summer afternoon, Hewitt Creek is a catch and release, artificial lure only stream. It's a little out of the way, but that isolation—and 18-inch trout which show up on stream surveys—make it attractive to dedicated

anglers. IF they can get to it.

Pine Hill Farms owns the goats, two guard donkeys and the electric fence that keeps them inside. The agreement includes a 'second helping' later this season, to keep the vegetation knocked back. The DNR is paying \$2,000 for the trial project. Steuck says that compares pretty well to the cost of bringing in equipment and a crew for a few days.

The goats were moved across the stream after a week or so, to chomp their way through the other side of the seven acre wildlife area. They watched the tour quietly from a wooded area. Occasionally one would walk out—with a mouthful of green—to look things over.

Though still early, the Ensign Hollow experiment suggests a lot of options.

"This could be another tool in our tool box; to keep areas in prairie, versus having succession go to woody vegetation and trees that we cannot actively manage without a lot of manpower," offers Steuck. "We might use them in areas with hard access; steep banks, rocky shorelines. Goats are sure-footed and can climb up and down that stuff. People can't."

Several 'goat for hire' companies have arisen across Wisconsin and Iowa. The recurring question Tuesday was, 'how much will it cost, with more goats available?'

For now, though, Hewitt Creek--an area purchased and maintained with fishing and hunting dollars--is open for business again.

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