

clean water
starts with you.
IOWA DNR WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT

WORKING FOR CLEAN WATER
2009 WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT SUCCESSES IN IOWA





Working for clean water

2009 watershed improvement successes in Iowa

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Left and cover: Stream in the Briggs Woods Lake watershed, Clay Smith

From the Director

Iowans are known for many things, and we've shown time and time again how we can come together to solve problems and accomplish great things. That includes improving our state's lakes, rivers and streams.

While there is still much work to do, people across the state are doing their part to ensure we have clean water for drinking, boating, swimming, fishing and wildlife. They're making individual changes in their homes and businesses, like creating rain gardens to catch and clean runoff, and using lawn fertilizers and household cleaners that are better for the environment. They're making changes in the fields, using conservation practices that help keep sediment, nutrients, bacteria and other pollutants from washing into our waters. They're also banding together, creating local watershed efforts that rally the community and provide resources for people wanting to help improve water quality.

The DNR continues to develop innovative tools and approaches to help Iowa groups reach their water quality goals. Whether it's assessing a watershed for problems or developing solutions in a watershed management plan, DNR staff can help you craft a successful strategy. Our watershed improvement, fisheries, wildlife, forestry and water quality staff – along with numerous other DNR staff – can contribute to your locally-led effort and help you achieve long-term success.

Water quality improvements don't happen overnight, but with Iowans' hard work, we're making progress. The following success stories are shining examples of Iowans doing their part, on an individual level and in coming together with their community – all resulting in improved water quality. And in many cases, that effort also brings a number of other benefits that strengthen a community's quality of life – like protecting drinking water, improving fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing, increasing outdoor recreational opportunities and building tourism.

We can all do our part. Clean water starts with you, and your neighbors and the DNR are here to help you along the way.



Richard Leopold
DNR Director





Rain gardens help collect and filter runoff, protecting East Okoboji Lake, Clay Smith

We all live in a watershed, an area of land that drains to a lake or stream. What we do on that land — whether a backyard, farm, small business or factory site — affects the health of our lakes, streams and rivers. Clean water starts with us.

When water runs off the land, it can carry pollutants with it. For example, motor oil can wash off our driveways and into storm sewers, which dump directly into a lake or stream without treatment. Rainfall can send loads of exposed soil from fields and bare ground into our waterways. If we don't make changes to the way we manage the land to keep soil, nutrients and other materials where they belong, they'll end up in our water.

Iowans are coming together in communities across the state to improve their local lakes, streams and rivers. They're investigating problems and creating long-term plans to improve and protect their water. They're working with the DNR and other local, state and federal agencies, which provide technical know-how, planning guidance and financial assistance. Local watershed leaders work one-on-one with landowners, homeowners and volunteers to make changes on the land and in our homes to improve the quality of water entering our lakes, streams and rivers. These organized efforts offer Iowans access to better resources and funding assistance to make improvements on their property that protect water quality.

While the Watershed Improvement Program heads up these watershed efforts for the DNR, projects are a collaborative effort with many DNR programs and other partners. Fisheries staff do in-stream and in-lake work that, together with better water quality, helps fish and aquatic life thrive. Wildlife staff work with landowners to install buffer strips and vegetation that provide habitat for pheasant, turkey and other wildlife while protecting streams. Our foresters help Iowans plant trees to stabilize streambanks. Our geology, water monitoring and water quality staff help identify problems and offer solutions. The DNR also works with a number of partners, such as the **Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS-DSC)**, the **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)** and **Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Districts**.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, provides DNR watershed improvement funding. DNR Watershed Improvement often funds local watershed efforts in cooperation with other DNR programs, IDALS, USDA-NRCS and soil and water conservation districts.



Rain garden along Carter Lake, Pottawattamie County, Clay Smith

Partner group initials used in this booklet:

County Conservation Board (CCB) ♦ Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) - Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) ♦ Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ♦ Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) ♦ Iowa State University (ISU) ♦ Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) ♦ U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) ♦ USDA Farm Services Agency (USDA-FSA) ♦ USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) ♦ USDA Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) ♦ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ♦ Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB)



Canada Geese at Diamond Lake, Lowell Washburn



Bringing a shallow lake to life

Dickinson County's Diamond Lake is a showcase example of how Iowa's shallow natural lakes are responding to a strong new management approach. Once shimmering blue jewels of pristine prairie landscapes, Iowa's shallow lakes have been used and degraded. Silt and algae now cloud once transparent waters; destructive, invasive bottom feeders, like carp, have pushed out native fish. Valuable aquatic plants and the wildlife they harbored have been severely reduced in number or, in the case of several species, have vanished altogether.

Historically, shallow lakes would go through natural dry cycles every decade or so, allowing the lake bottom to dry out and slowly refill. That gave way to lush new plant growth that holds sediment and nutrients out of the water and creates food and habitat for birds and other wildlife. But people's demands on the land and the water have kept this natural, rejuvenating cycle from occurring as it should.

Following a complete lake draw-down two summers ago, Diamond Lake is slowly refilling. But this restoration is not a one-time fix. The DNR's new management approach will adjust water levels every few years to mimic the natural drought cycle shallow lakes require to be healthy. "It's really hard to believe that this lake has just been pea soup green for the past 80 years," said DNR Fisheries Biologist Mike Hawkins. "Today, the water is so absolutely clear, so transparent that you can see every single detail of what's on the bottom. We're seeing a very strong vegetative response and wildlife is increasing. Birdlife is everywhere."

Lush growths of bulrush, arrowhead, burr reed and cattail stretch from the shoreline to the edge of the lake's open water center. Sedge wrens, rails, yellow-headed blackbirds and other marsh birds call from among the vertical threads of the living green curtain. The lake hosts scores of marsh creatures – tadpoles, water boatman, dragonflies and leopard frogs. As Diamond Lake historically supported game fish, the DNR restocked the lake with 80,000 fingerling perch this summer and will add young northern pike next year. And with those incredible hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities come visitors and tourism dollars for nearby communities.

"What we're basically seeing here is the equivalent of taking the Dead Sea and turning it into a viable, living resource," said Gary Phillips, an aquatic plant specialist and environmental studies coordinator at Iowa Lakes Community College. "I think you're certain to see phenomenal fish growth at Diamond Lake, and there will certainly be a significant increase in the number of ducks and geese being seen by waterfowl hunters."



Wetland scientists Gary Phillips, Mike Hawkins and Mark Gulick examine newly emerged aquatic plant life at Diamond Lake, Lowell Washburn

Project partners:

Iowa DNR
Ducks Unlimited
Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Local donors



Bryer McCoy and Mikaleh McCoy fish Briggs Woods Lake, Clay Smith

Locals enjoy park, lake makeover

What was once a disappointment to Hamilton County locals has become a mecca for outdoor enthusiasts.

Briggs Woods Lake was built to last 100 years, but it was heading downhill rapidly after only 30 years. Large algae mats prevented anglers from fishing from shore and created problems for boaters. It took a letter to the editor in the local newspaper, decrying the decay of the lake and the surrounding county park, to spark a community effort that returned the park and lake to their former glory.

Farmers, residents and professionals created a watershed council in 1999 to pursue grants to make lake improvement possible. The Hamilton County Conservation Board began investing in park improvements. The City of Webster City continued work on a multi-use trail stretching six miles from the town to the park.

The council began a project to work with landowners in the predominantly agricultural watershed to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients reaching the lake. Silt and soil were filling in the lake, and excess nutrients were causing the problematic algae blooms. The lake was drawn down so high school students could help install fishing jetties and fish habitat structures. Community volunteers pulled trash out of the lake. The project also built a silt dam, which created a pond to collect excess nutrients before they could reach the lake.

The conservation board made a number of upgrades to park facilities, including renovating the beach and adding a lakeside amphitheater. And people responded, coming to visit the park – one of the state’s first county parks – three and four times more than they did before the improvements. Conservation board member George Caggiano said camping traffic increased dramatically. The trail, according to Webster City Parks and Recreation Director Kent Harfst, draws visitors from a 25-mile radius.

“People still come up to me and say they can’t believe how great the lake still is,” said Sean McCoy, who coordinated the watershed effort and serves on the watershed council.

Caggiano, who also serves on the watershed council, enjoys the improved lake as an angler. “There’s a dramatic difference with water quality. This summer, I could see 8 to 10 feet down in the water. That’s unprecedented for an artificial lake that time of year. There are excellent bass, and the bluegill quality is mind-boggling,” he said. “Water attracts people like crazy. Any time you can enhance the park, to improve facilities – it makes it better for the community and county all around.”



Sean McCoy and landowner Karen McGrane, who restored 10 acres of wetlands and created four grassed waterways in the watershed, Clay Smith

Project partners:

Iowa DNR
IDALS-DSC
USDA-NRCS
Briggs Woods Watershed Council
Hamilton SWCD
Hamilton CCB
City of Webster City

Ingraham Construction
Bob and Mary Van Diest
First State Bank
Jim and Barb Sylvester
Eduardo and Paulette Reveiz
Louis and Sharon Hassebrock
Hamilton County Secondary Roads



Downtown Omaha overlooking Carter Lake, Clay Smith



A community plans for clean water

A century ago, a re-routed Missouri River stranded Carter Lake between two cities, two counties and two states.

Since then, the oxbow lake – bordered by Omaha on one side and Carter Lake, Iowa, on the other – had become a dumping ground. With storm water as the only source of new water for the lake, urban pollutants run off into the lake and water levels are often too low. Frequent algae blooms and periodic high bacteria levels can make the lake less than ideal for boating and swimming.

“It was a dark, dreary, sad little lake,” said Jeanne Eibes, who set out with a group of her neighbors on the lakefront in 2005 to find a way to improve water quality. Forming the Carter Lake Preservation Society, Eibes sought out partners in the community and in city, county and state governments on both sides of the lake. They pulled refrigerators, safes, railroad tracks, bowling balls and other trash out of the lake. They made numerous presentations to boards, agencies and the Iowa Legislature on the lake’s plight before starting work on a watershed management plan.

The plan, created with the knowledge and expertise of a local advisory board and technical advisory team, researched problems in the lake’s watershed and laid out action steps for improving water quality. “This effort was different from the way watershed projects are normally done,” said Kevin Seevers of West Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District. “It was based on the extensive involvement of watershed residents, businesses and lake users, along with the advisory groups.”

The Carter Lake Water Quality Project is now putting the plan in action with practices like rain gardens, wetlands, plant buffers and shoreline stabilization to improve the lake’s poor water quality. This community effort is leading in-lake restoration projects and is working with residents to help, from choosing the right lawn fertilizer to picking up pet waste. That’s on top of work done by the cities and preservation society.

“With the effort we gave, people started looking at Carter Lake as a truly magnificent resource,” Eibes said. The Preservation Society continues to support the watershed effort, working on improving recreation opportunities and addressing the water level. The cities of Omaha and Carter Lake are digging a well that will keep water in the lake at levels to support both a healthy ecosystem and recreation. “Everyone was impressed because of the community support of this plan. They showed initiative and stewardship for the lake,” Eibes said. “If you have community activism, it points the spotlight on the watershed.”



Project partners:

Iowa DNR	Pottawattamie County	Nebraska Game and
IDALS-DSC	Iowa State University	Parks Commission
USDA-NRCS	Extension	Metropolitan Area
Carter Lake	University of	Planning Agency
Preservation Society	Nebraska-Lincoln	Papio-Missouri River
CLEAR Water Council	Extension	Natural Resources
West Pottawattamie	Nebraska Dept. of	District
County SWCD	Environmental	Olsson Associates
City of Carter Lake	Quality	Tetra Tech
City of Omaha	Nebraska DNR	



Relaxing at Viking Lake, Clay Smith



Viking battles algae, sediment

This southwest Iowa lake, once known for its excellent crappie fishing, was so thick with algae it looked like someone had been pouring green paint into the water. But outstanding efforts in the watershed and in Viking Lake have cleared and cleaned up the water – and people have noticed.

“People remark how significant of a change has occurred. The difference is night and day. We couldn’t be happier,” said Russell Field, manager of Viking Lake State Park. Fishing has improved drastically, anglers have returned and more people are visiting the park since water quality improved, he said.

Work in the watershed – both in the park and on private land – created 32 ponds to trap sediment and filter pollutants. A new 5.5 mile trail connects most of the ponds in the park, 16 of which boast fishing. Landowners built wetlands and terraces, and fenced cattle out of streams that feed the lake. Local schools and the Montgomery County Conservation Board sampled water. The local watershed project worked to move a small housing development from outdated individual septic systems to a community system. The lake was drained in 2006 to stabilize 8,000 feet of shoreline, build fishing jetties, and create rock reefs and spawning beds for fish habitat.

“Landowners were more than willing to do what they needed to do for the lake,” said Dan Case, who led the local watershed effort. Between their efforts and work in the park, the amount of sediment reaching the lake was reduced by an estimated 90 percent. That helped cut nitrogen in the lake by 67 percent and phosphorus by 53 percent, reducing algae problems. Now you can see 5 feet down in the lake, an improvement of a foot and a half.

Fish, restocked after the lake refilled in 2007, are thriving. Anglers are hooking 17-inch largemouth bass, 7-inch bluegills and channel catfish topping 20 inches. The lake hosted a fishing tournament this summer, with more likely in the future. “Crappies have been our bread and butter here, and they should be dynamite in a year or two,” Field said. And despite cool summer temperatures, the improved water quality drew swimmers back to Viking’s beach in greater numbers.

“These improvements will prolong the life of our lake,” Case said, “ensuring the next 50 years of its life will be better than the first 50.”



Project partners:

Iowa DNR	Stanton Viking	Dick & Marilyn Paul
IDALS-DSC	Stanton Rural Electric	David Wedner family
USDA-NRCS	Cooperative	Roger Stewart
Montgomery SWCD	Southwest Regional	Construction
Montgomery CCB	Water District	Kenny Norris
Iowa DOT	Dave Pierson family	Construction
Iowa Natural Heritage	Rod Goodemote family	Gary Mckneese
Foundation	Kit Johnson family	Excavation
USDA Rural Development	Doug Palmquist	Empire Construction
Villisca Review	Roy & Claudia Marshall	Sickels Construction



The Nierling family built up buffer areas around Pine Creek, which runs through the family farm, Clay Smith

Decorah family champions conservation

The Nierling family farm northwest of Decorah has undergone what Corey Meyer likes to call a “conservation conversion.”

Matt Nierling knew that there were problems on his 120-cow dairy farm, but he wasn't so sure about what to do or if he should get involved with the local Coldwater and Pine Creek watershed effort. A trip to the Winneshiek Soil and Water Conservation District office in Decorah set in motion a new approach to farming and a commitment to conservation for the Nierlings. “He went from a guy sitting on the fence about our watershed effort to one of the project's biggest proponents,” said Meyer, who leads the Coldwater and Pine Creek efforts. With guidance, technical assistance and funding from the watershed group and its partners like NRCS, DSC and DNR, the Nierlings pinpointed problems and created solutions.

A big gully ran from their feedlot and pasture down to Pine Creek, where cattle had trampled the banks. The Nierlings built a pond to catch sediment and remedy the gully problem. They installed 2.5 miles of fence to keep cattle out of the creek and added 700 feet of water lines to provide cattle fresh water. The family installed structures to store manure and catch and filter runoff. They developed a plan for applying manure to crop fields to prevent overloading the soil with nutrients. About 3,500 newly planted trees on each side of Pine Creek create a riparian buffer to strengthen the banks and filter out pollutants before they reach the stream. In all, the Nierlings are keeping an estimated 234 tons of soil out of the creek each year.

“I knew there needed to be improvements. It was just the right thing to do,” Nierling said. “I think it's made a difference. I can see the bottom of the creek now, and you couldn't before.” Nierling bought the farm, in the family for generations, from his parents five years ago and began making changes with the help of conservation programs' guidance, cost-share and low-interest loans. “The programs make it affordable, but it's still an investment,” he said. “It's hard to beat that interest rate. It's a real easy program to enroll in,” Nierling said of the State Revolving Fund, which he used for low-interest loans to build the pond and a manure management system. Nierling's conservation conversion didn't stop with putting practices on his land. He wanted to make sure his neighbors knew about the benefits those practices had for his family's operation. Nierling joined the watershed advisory board and invited other farmers to visit his farm to see how practices worked first-hand. “I'm just a big supporter of these programs and promoting them,” he said.



Jolene and Matt Nierling, with son Justin, made big improvements to the family farm to improve Pine Creek, which runs through the property, Clay Smith

Project partners

Matt and Jolene Nierling
Iowa DNR
IDALS-DSC
USDA-NRCS
Coldwater and Pine Creek Watershed Project
Winneshiek SWCD



Clear Creek headwaters near Conroy, Clay Smith



Solution saves money, Clear Creek

Today, the headwaters of Clear Creek in Iowa County live up to their billing – clear and clean. But just five years ago, it was anything but.

Toilet paper in the stream greeted an IOWATER water monitoring volunteer in 2004. There to collect water samples, he noticed the paper coming from a drainage tile. Not surprisingly, those samples from the site, just southeast of Conroy, indicated human sewage in the water. With that, the DNR issued a notice of violation to the Iowa County Board of Health.

What followed was a county-wide effort to give the residents of the small town of Conroy, one of hundreds of unsewered communities in Iowa, affordable wastewater treatment and a cleaner Clear Creek. Coming together voluntarily to create a community treatment system made Conroy eligible for grants – otherwise, the village’s almost 300 residents would have to foot the bill on their own to update their homes’ existing septic systems. The county board of supervisors and citizens organized public meetings, out of which a strong partnership was born.

“Conroy was in need of good quality water and also had a wastewater issue,” said Chad Coburn with the Poweshiek Water Association, which had connected Conroy to its rural drinking water system a couple of years earlier, resolving hard-water issues for the town’s residents. The water association, which already had a couple of wastewater projects under its belt, offered its experience securing grants and working with engineers.

The first steps were to form a sewer district, then acquire land and easements for 83 home hookups and the treatment lagoons. Then in 2008, they installed the new system and plugged the old septics. Conroy residents, the Iowa (County) Soil and Water Conservation District, the Clear Creek watershed project, Iowa County Board of Supervisors, East Central Iowa Council of Governments, the Johnson and Iowa County Watershed Coalition and the DNR all joined in the project.

While additional work needs to be done to address other water quality problems in the greater Clear Creek watershed, recent monitoring shows the Conroy effort greatly reduced local bacteria problems. “It’s made a big improvement in that area of the watershed,” said Steve Johnston, NRCS district conservationist for Iowa County. This year, DNR staff visited the site and saw only clear water coming from that same tile line that five years earlier dumped raw sewage into the stream.



Watershed coordinator James Martin watches a crew close a septic tank and create a connection to the new Conroy sewer system, Lynn Betts, IDALS-DSC

Project partners:

Iowa DNR	Clear Creek watershed project
IDALS-DSC	Iowa County
USDA-NRCS	East Central Iowa Council of Governments
Iowa SWCD	Conroy residents
Johnson and Iowa County Watershed Coalition	IOWATER volunteers
Iowa County Board of Supervisors	WIRB
Poweshiek Water Association	USDA Rural Development



Decorah trout angler Steve Matter fishes Trout Run, Clay Smith



Trout Run a lasting effort

Winneshiek County still enjoys the benefits of a successful water quality effort at Trout Run Creek, nearly 10 years after its completion.

Before the effort, sediment accumulated in the creek, livestock trampled streambeds, and manure, nutrients and agricultural chemicals washed into the stream and groundwater. Sediment damaged the aquatic habitat by filling pools and making the stream wider, shallower and cloudy.

The Winneshiek Soil and Water Conservation District and landowners in the 22,250-acre watershed recognized a problem and set out to fix it in 1991. Nearly 85 percent of farmers in the area adopted conservation practices, including strip cropping, animal waste storage structures and nutrient management to reduce runoff to the creek. Between 1996 and 1999 alone, 27 animal waste storage structures were constructed to hold 15,214 tons of manure. That's enough manure to fill a 4.8-mile-long line of dump trucks.

Wayne and Cheryl Wangsness, who farm 400 acres in the watershed, actively participated in the effort. They seeded a 40-acre forest and put in terraces, waterways and a pond. "It's amazing how much Trout Run has changed in my lifetime," Wayne said. "When I was young, it was very dirty. Now the water is clear, even after it rains."

The work that the community put in is still reaping benefits today, bringing improvements and tourists to the city of Decorah, just north of Trout Run. Trout Run is a put and take creek that drew 18,000 anglers – and more than \$480,000 – in 2006, said Bill Kalishek with DNR fisheries in Decorah. Kalishek said Trout Run Creek is unique because it's not only a great coldwater creek that ranks in the top tier on the Trout Angler Survey, but it also houses a hatchery responsible for rearing 120,000 rainbow and brown trout each year. "The hatchery is a big draw for families," Kalishek said. "Kids love to feed the fish."

Families also enjoy a new recreation path under construction in Decorah. The path allows people to travel near the creek, drawing tourists and increasing business for area restaurants, hotels and shops. Four universally accessible fishing areas were built off the trail as well.

"The quality of the stream was one of the draws for the path," Kalishek said. "It's great to ride right by a creek so clear it looks like a mountain stream."



Cheryl and Wayne Wangsness created this pond to help protect Trout Run, Clay Smith

Project partners:

Iowa DNR
IDALS-DSC
USDA-NRCS
Winneshiek SWCD
USDA-FSA

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Winneshiek County
University of Iowa Hygienic
Laboratory



Prairie grasses and flowers help filter out nutrients from runoff before they can enter the drinking water source of Remsen, seen in the background. They also provide valuable wildlife habitat. Inset: The plantings protect the town's wellhead, Clay Smith



Innovative plan helps drinking water

Folks in Remsen know that if you want clean water, you go to the source. With high nitrate levels threatening its drinking water wells, the town faced expensive treatment costs. But some innovative thinking created an affordable solution that benefits residents, students and wildlife.

Through a major source water protection project, the city created a comprehensive plan that protects drinking water sources by decreasing pollutants reaching public wells. The plan called for acquiring land around the wells and converting that land from crops to native grasses. Those deep-rooted prairie plants use nitrate in the soil before it can seep into groundwater and the wells, and the plants give shelter to wildlife, especially pheasants.

While the DNR contacted Remsen about participating in a pilot source water project, it quickly became a local effort, led by a community planning team and a supporting cast of federal, state and local partners. The planning team worked with the DNR on a groundwater investigation and water monitoring plan, as well as identifying high-nitrate wells and priority areas. USDA chose nitrate-reducing options, then Pheasants Forever provided the seed, planted the grasses and is maintaining the area's native plants. "Projects on local wellheads give us the opportunity to replace some of those acres of lost habitat – they're critical no matter where they are, and this helps a community's drinking water source," said Pheasants Forever's John Linqvist.

"The source water protection plan offers so many benefits to this community," said Becky Ohrtman, who coordinates the DNR's Source Water Protection Program. "It all goes back to the groundwater assessment, careful planning and a long-term partnership."

The Remsen Fire Department keeps weeds in check by assisting with controlled burns of the native grasses. The DNR will continue to monitor the public wells, watching for dropping nitrate levels. The community team, which worked to secure grants and State Revolving Fund loans, will also work to plug abandoned wells to prevent further groundwater contamination and on projects to keep their neighbors involved. As a result, the town gets improved drinking water, pheasants have a new place to call home and students can use the native plantings as a 70-acre outdoor classroom. "Everyone in town is pretty excited about this project," said Steve Pick, Remsen utilities director.



Steve Pick, Remsen Utilities Director, and Don Kolker, Remsen Utility Board Chairman, at the town's drinking water wellhead. Clay Smith

Project partners:

Iowa DNR
USDA-NRCS
City of Remsen
Local landowners
Pheasants Forever
Plymouth County

Plymouth SWCD
Sioux Rivers RC&D
WIRB
State Revolving Fund
USDA-Agricultural Research
Service



Trout Run on the Wangsness farm, Winneshiek County, Clay Smith

Planning today for success tomorrow

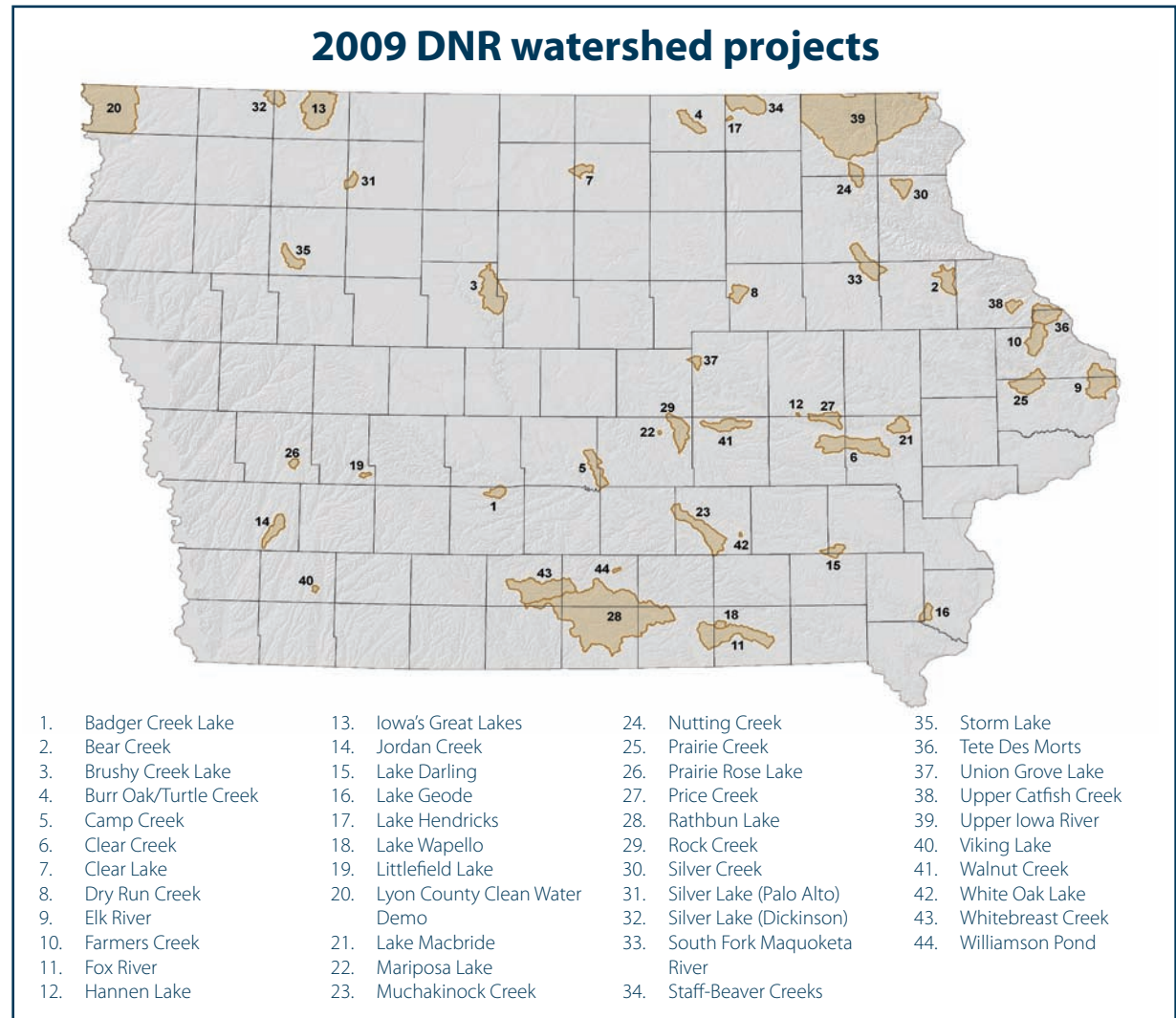
We're with you every step of the way. When Iowans come together in their communities with the common goal of improving their lake, stream or river, the DNR and our partners can help you take action.

With our new DNR Watershed Planning Grants, local groups can receive funding, technical assistance and guidance to create a Watershed Management Plan. The plan assesses the watershed for problems, develops solutions and finds ways to involve your community in the effort. In short, the plan is a road map designed to move you toward success and help you get back on track if detours pop up along the way.

Once you have a plan, you need to put it in action, and the DNR can help with our DNR Watershed Implementation Grants. Use these grants to launch your plan, making changes on the land to improve the water. Implementation Grants are more than funding – DNR staff provide technical and outreach assistance, and guidance. Our partners, IDALS-DSC and NRCS, also offer additional grant funding.

“Sound planning is the foundation of any successful effort,” said Steve Hopkins, who coordinates the DNR’s watershed grants. “Plans support long-term efforts and strategies to improve our water and keep it clean. As we help Iowa groups build solid Watershed Management Plans, we’re excited to see the successes down the road.”

Visit www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/grants.html for more information on DNR watershed grants.



For more information about DNR Watershed Improvement: Steve Hopkins at (515) 281-6402 or Stephen.Hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov | www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/

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Fishing Viking Lake, Clay Smith



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