PROJECT A.W.A.R.E.

A Watershed Awareness River Expedition

Ever hear this –

"Don't play in the mud!
Keep your shoes dry!
Don't touch that garbage!"

Well, get ready to break those "rules"...

Project AWARE brings out the muck-loving kid in everyone. This annual, weeklong river cleanup and water-quality outing sends people from across Iowa (and beyond) to a different river every June. Since its inception in 2003, hundreds of volunteers have set out in canoes and kayaks to haul garbage from the water.

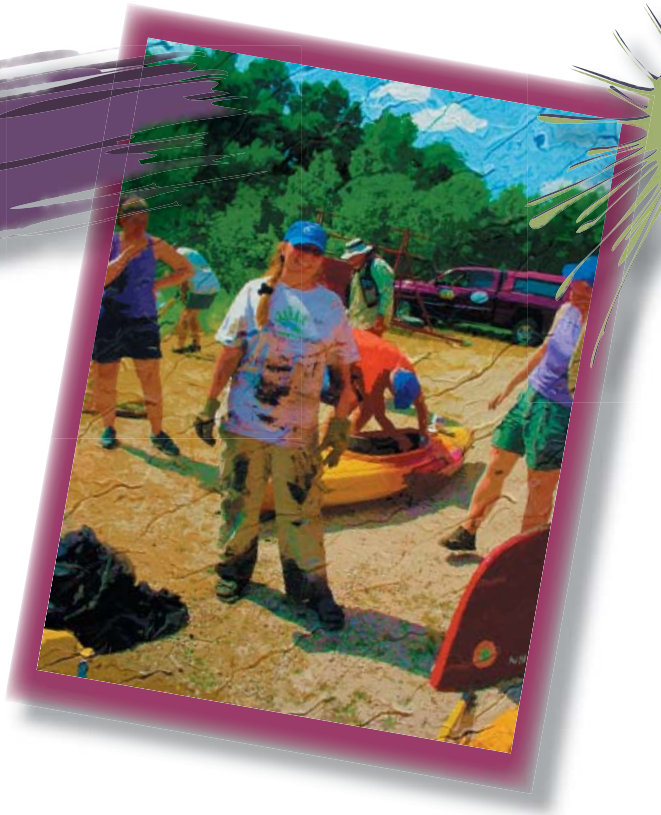
Inspired by visions of clean, clear watersheds across the state, these volunteers spend anywhere from one day to an entire week cleaning the river, making new friends, and learning about natural resources. The program also features free camping, affordable meals…and experiences you won't get anywhere else.

Who: Anyone – paddlers of all ages and skill levels are welcome!
What: 7-day, 7-night float trip down an Iowa river – volunteers participate in water quality and wildlife monitoring, educational programs, and river cleanup.
When: National Rivers Month (June) – Spend one day, the whole week, or anywhere in between on Project AWARE.
Why: • To engage volunteers in a service learning project that produces tangible, quantitative results (citizens involved, river miles traveled, and quantity of trash removed, recycled, reused, or properly disposed). • To increase awareness about, and involvement in, water quality issues that threaten the health of Iowa's water resources, and to promote advocacy and action towards their improvement and protection. • To demonstrate that Iowa citizens are passionate, motivated, and dedicated to making a difference in water quality – **one stretch of river, one week a year, one piece of trash at a time.**

Where: www.iowaprojectaware.com

Project AWARE is coordinated by two Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources volunteer programs – IOWATER and Keepers of the Land.

Project AWARE 2005
Little Sioux River
June 18 – 25



Last year marked Project AWARE's third time on the water. Nearly 200 volunteers gathered in northwest Iowa to hunt for trash on the Little Sioux River, traveling 96 miles from Milford to Cherokee. Their search was productive…

2005 Statistics:

- River Miles: 96
- Participants: 197
- Trash Removed: 124-cubic yards (23 10-wheel dump trucks)
- Trash Recycled: 85%
- With the items collected, volunteers could have:
  - Redecorated a house with a stove, refrigerator, televisions, computer, freezer, washer, dryer, microwave, air conditioner, toilet, sink, carpets, bathroom tile, screen windows, kerosene heater, furnace duct, siding, gutters, shingles, coffee pots, fuse box, mattress, box springs, sofa, fire extinguishers, joint compound, and dishes.
  - Equipped a farm with 125 fence posts, 20 55-gallon barrels, barn door, gate, 300-gallon livestock watering tank, 16-hole hog feeder, elevator equipment, barbed wire, panel fencing, feed chutes, chicken waterer, tiling, plow parts, pitchfork, vaccine bottles, tractor tires, and intact farm chemicals and diesel oil.
  - Built a nice car with a hood, trunk, grill, fenders, bumpers, license plates (1962 and 1975), gas tanks, bucket seat, headlights, rearview mirror, car tires, and door handles of dumped vehicles.
  - Hosted a well-attended celebration bash with countless beverage bottles, wine glasses, fishing equipment, perfume bottles, propane tanks, BBQ grills, sleds, a boat dock, music records, 4 bicycles, patio furniture, and miscellaneous toys including a metal case from a decades-old original erector set and a metal spinner from a bingo game.

Time to Put Water Quality on the Front Burner...

A metal burner element from an electric stove provided the most inspirational piece of recovered trash, reminding us that it's time to put water quality where it belongs – on the "front burner."

As part of **Riverse**, AWARE's creative side-project, Iowa artist David Williamson produced an artistic rendering of the burner and teamed up with volunteers to create a collaborative poem called "*Current*."

In addition to the poem, Williamson also worked with fairgoers at last summer's Iowa State and Clay County fairs to create a sculpture from the Little Sioux River trash. The completed sculpture – a giant, metal water droplet – will make an appearance during Project AWARE 2006 before moving to its permanent home in the Wallace Building in Des Moines.

Current

Above us,
a blue heron is winging its way
through the pink and orange pages
of a new morning.
Behind us,
current from the Little Sioux River
is coaxing bison bones out from clay.
The heron will see more than we know.
The bones know more than they say.

Today we will align with frogs
and dangle our toes in muck
wondering . . .
spring: vernal or metal?
barb: catfish or wire?
drum: sound or barrel?
river: water or fire?

Salvaging these tangled breaths
borrowed from tomorrow
will restore pieces of the future
before children arrive.
How is it other than stealing,
to not keep this river alive . . .
channel: home or number?
cycle: season or tire?
bar: sand or wrought iron?
river: water or fire?

How to find it:
evidence we wish wasn't there—
preferring a bottle-less message
shared among those afloat
and aware . . .
element: habitat or burner?
wake: canoe or pyre?
cell: living or locked?
river: water or fire?

Collaborative Poem from Riverse *at the Iowa State Fair, Clay County Fair, & Project AWARE, 2005.*

2006 Plans

Project AWARE will once again place water quality issues on the front burner with its 2006 expedition. This time around, Project AWARE volunteers will cover the southeast corner of the state, traveling nearly 100 miles on the Iowa and English rivers from Iowa City to the Mississippi River.

For more information and to register, visit our website: **www.iowaprojectaware.com**

Project AWARE 2006
Iowa River Watershed
June 17 – 24
Join us!

Thanks for helping protect and improve Iowa's rivers!

If it weren't for the sponsors...

- **Tons of trash would stay in the river.**
- **We'd miss our chance to dig through the muck.**
- **We'd lose out on all the fun.**

2005 Project AWARE Sponsorship Series:

Platinum Paddle ($3,000) - Iowa DNR, IOWATER, Johnston Autostores & AC Delco, Keepers of the Land, University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory. **Distinguished Bow** ($2,000) – Iowa State University, Tyson Retail Deli. **Golden Yoke** ($1,000) – Hy-Vee, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Tone's Brothers. **Silver Stern** (up to $1,000) – Anderson Erickson Dairy, American Republic Insurance, Avant Hand Sanitizer, Berkley Fishing, Boy Scout Troop 242, Buena Vista County Conservation Board, Buena Vista Recycling Center, Builders Sharpening and Service, Casey's General Stores, Central Iowa Paddlers, Cherokee County Conservation Board, Cherokee County Solid Waste, Cities of Cherokee, Linn Grove, Peterson, Spencer, Clay County Conservation Board, Dickinson County Conservation Board, Dickinson County Landfill, Fareway, First State Tire Disposal, Galbraith Appliance Repair, Goodwill, Horizons Unlimited, Iowa NatureMapping, Iowa Recycling Association, Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Society, Iowa Waste Exchange, Koenig's Portable Toilets, Lake Propane Gas Company, MidAmerica Recycling, MidAmerican Energy, NW Iowa Area Solid Waste Agency, O'Brien County Conservation Board, Sioux Central Community Schools, Snyder & Associates, Townsend Engineering, Wal-Mart, Wells' Dairy.

Photos and images adapted from photos by Iowa DNR staff and by IOWATER volunteer Bill Graham (original photo for p. 2 top).

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Iowa Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Program Web Site – wqm.igsb.uiowa.edu

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