



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## FISCAL YEARS 2014 – 2017

**IOWA DNR MISSION:** To conserve and enhance our natural resources in cooperation with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life in Iowa and ensure a legacy for future generations.

**IOWA DNR VISION:** Leading Iowans in caring for our natural resources



The work of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources touches the lives of nearly every Iowan. From managing fish and wildlife programs and ensuring the health of Iowa's forests and prairies, to providing recreational opportunities in Iowa's state parks and management areas to implementing state and federal laws that protect air, land and water, the DNR encourages the enjoyment and stewardship of Iowa's natural resources by all of our citizens. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources Strategic Plan reflects the Governor's Goals for Iowa and how the DNR contributes to those goals.

### GOAL: IOWA WILL HAVE A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR WORK AND PLAY.

- Ensure the effectiveness of air, water and land quality programs by ensuring program requirements are easy to understand and implement, permits are issued in a timely manner, and programs are implemented consistent with state and federal laws.
- Make Iowa a preferred place to do business through expanded Business Regulatory Assistance and consistent and fair treatment of the regulated community.
- Increase technical assistance available in an effort to coach the regulated community for compliance and build stewardship of Iowa's natural resources.
- Expand existing collaborative efforts with our stakeholder groups to engage them in DNR's implementation of administrative rules and fees structures.





## GOAL: IOWANS WILL CONNECT WITH NATURE.

- Provide safe, high-quality recreational opportunities across the state in an effort to contribute to the high standard of living in Iowa.
- Foster economic development through nature-based activities.
- Actively recruit new license buyers and work to retain existing license buyers.
- Build environmental and natural resource awareness and responsibility among Iowans through improved and enhanced conservation outreach and participation programs.
- Actively manage DNR properties to restore, enhance, conserve, and protect Iowa’s natural resources, encourage public access, and promote education about Iowa’s outdoor resources.
- Ensure that DNR regulations and license requirements are accessible to and easy to understand by our constituents.
- Build and expand partnerships with conservation groups and organizations to provide improved access to natural areas and engage more Iowans with Iowa’s outdoor resources.

## GOAL: THE DNR CONTINUALLY STRIVES TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE.

- Strengthen the DNR’s financial health by focusing available resources on priority areas.
- Ensure grants awarded by the DNR align with DNR priorities.
- Hire, retain and support a diverse and highly skilled workforce.
- Ensure all employees receive adequate safety training, are accountable, use agency resources effectively and efficiently, and perform in the public interest.
- Improve IT functionality for DNR staff in all statewide offices.
- Continuously review DNR’s regulatory framework to ensure conformance with statutory law and to evaluate the effectiveness of the rules in implementing those statutes.





# AIR QUALITY OPERATIONAL PLAN

## FISCAL YEARS 2014-2017

By managing our air quality resources to keep our air clean and scenic vistas clear, DNR helps Iowa communities grow while maintaining a high quality of outdoor living. We encourage all citizens to enjoy and be a steward of Iowa's air. The Air Quality Bureau operational plan reflects the Governor's goals for Iowa and how the DNR contributes to those goals:



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The Air Quality Bureau's responsibilities are to:

- Meet current state and federal standards for Ozone, Particles, Nitrogen Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide, Sulfur Dioxide, and Lead.
- Involve community stakeholders in meeting new federal standards.
- Coach the regulated community for compliance.
- Support new business growth and build stewardship of Iowa's air resource.
- Build environmental and natural resource awareness and responsibility among all Iowans. Relate air quality and health, emphasizing air quality must be clean for those with compromised respiratory systems and young children whose lungs have not fully developed.



*Keeping outdoor air quality within U.S. EPA limits allows people to minimize lung injury if breathing in fine particles and other air pollutants.*



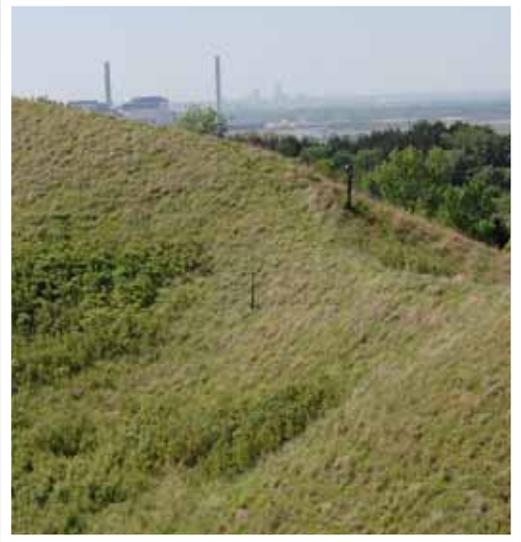
*Ground-level ozone interferes with the ability of plants to produce and store food, compromising growth and reproduction. Soybeans are a crop particularly susceptible to ozone. In Iowa, production could be reduced by 15 to 20 percent, depending on weather patterns that trap ozone close to the earth, rather than dispersing the molecules.*

## Strategies Air Quality Bureau Will Incorporate into Its Operations

- Cooperatively work with stakeholders to help identify and secure funding for Iowa's air program to meet the state's ongoing and new regulatory requirements.
- Focus financial resources, including grant awards, on air quality priorities.
- Improve information technology resources to increase efficiency of services.

### AIR QUALITY RESPONSIBILITIES, CONT.

- Provide safe, clean air to support high quality recreational opportunities and for environmental equality across the state.
- Actively manage and protect Iowa's natural resources, promote public awareness of air quality and its relationship with the health of our natural resources.
- Build and expand partnerships with environmental groups, public health, communities and industry organizations to improve understanding and management of our air resource.
- Streamline permit applications to improve efficiency for regulated businesses; issue permits in a timely manner.
- Ensure that DNR regulations and permit requirements are accessible, easy to understand, conform to statutory law and are effectively implemented with engaged air stakeholder groups.
- Provide consistent and fair business regulatory assistance, as well as partner with state agencies and organizations to assist expanding business opportunities and expedite permit processing so Iowa is a preferred place to do business.
- Hire, retain and support a diverse and highly skilled workforce that is provided with adequate safety training and accountability, makes effective use of agency resources and performs in the public interest.



*Visability is affected by fine particles in the air created by combustion and chemical reactions from both manmade and natural sources.*



*The above photos were taken from the same spot in the Loess Hills on May 11, 2012. The top photo looks southeast toward Council Bluffs and the other photo faces northwest.*





# FIELD SERVICES OPERATIONAL PLAN

## FISCAL YEARS 2014-2017

Field Services Bureau staffers are the front line of the DNR for environmental concerns, explaining scientific and legal details of environmental regulations as they assist the regulated community to achieve environmental compliance with solutions that support the economic prosperity of local areas and the state. The Field Services Bureau operational plan reflects the Governor’s Goals for Iowa and how the DNR contributes to these goals:



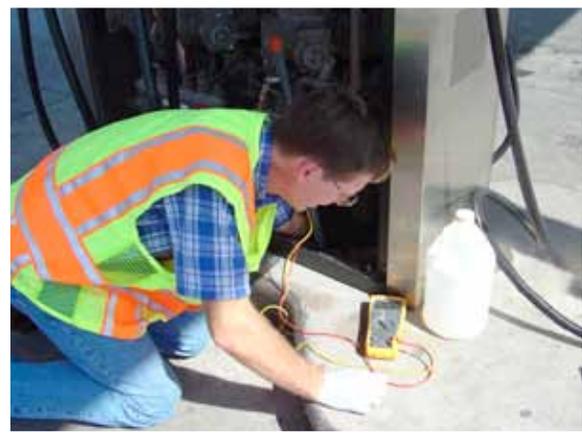
**IOWA WILL HAVE A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR WORK AND PLAY.**

**IOWANS WILL CONNECT WITH NATURE.**

**IOWA DNR CONTINUALLY STRIVES TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE.**

The Field Services Bureau’s responsibilities are to:

- Provide round-the-clock response to spills and hazardous conditions and assist with remediation.
- Work closely with regulated industries and producers to assure effective communications, timely permitting and protection of the environment.
- Provide one-on-one technical assistance and coach the regulated community for compliance and to build stewardship of Iowa’s environment.
- Work with counties, cities, parks, and recreational areas to assure their facilities meet safe drinking water, wastewater treatment, solid waste management and air quality requirements.
- Inspect the regulated community to ensure compliance with regulations that protect the air, water, groundwater and land in a fair and consistent manner so all Iowans live in a healthy environment,



*An DNR environmental specialist tests for corroded metal gasoline tanks and piping at a gasoline station.*



*Field Services staff stay knowledgeable of local water supply operations so they can assist with decisions that may affect community water quality.*

## Strategies the Field Services Bureau Will Incorporate into Its Operations

- Regularly review and update compliance priorities for all environmental programs to ensure efforts are consistent with evolving program rules and priorities.
- Engage individuals, environmental groups, public health, communities and industry organizations to support responsible and long-term care of our natural resources.
- Focus financial resources on priorities that will produce the most healthful benefits.



### FIELD SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES, CONT.

- Conduct complaint investigations with promptness, consistency and fairness.
- Take advantage of work situations to explain environmental programs, rules and the role of DNR to Iowans, so they understand how their behavior and choices affect their health, natural resources and nature.
- Promote public awareness of the social and economic benefits of a high quality environment.
- Hire, retain and support a diverse and highly skilled workforce that is provided with adequate safety training, accountability, makes effective use of agency resources and performs in the public interest.
- Provide staff with access to management, legal and technical resources as needed during incidents, such as containing and cleaning up chemical spills, and during subsequent investigations.

*Field Services staff help contain hazardous spills and notify people of threats to their health and the environment. Field staff direct the removal of contamination from water and land. Citizens are encouraged to call the DNR spill line, 515-281-8694, about suspicious activity involving the release of hazardous materials or illegal dumping. Staff will investigate to determine the responsible party, who will be assessed for damages and the cost of removing contamination.*





# LAND QUALITY OPERATIONAL PLAN

## FISCAL YEARS 2014-2017

The DNR helps communities grow while maintaining healthy living and recreational spaces, and bolstering partnerships of land and groundwater quality stewardship. Land quality programs reduce waste and pollution, oversee landfills and underground storage tanks, and manage flood plains. Contaminated areas are investigated and mitigation is directed. State dams are inspected for safety. Geographic information system maps are produced for public use. The Land Quality Bureau’s operational plan reflects the Governor’s Goals for Iowa and how the DNR contributes to those goals:

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The Land Quality Bureau’s responsibilities are to:

- Protect people and land from manmade and natural health threats, including leaks from underground storage tanks, solid waste disposal, damages from floods, contaminated soils and groundwater.
- Engage environmental agencies, landowners, communities and facilities to reduce waste and prevent pollution through educational, technical and financial assistance.
- Assist entities with finding and applying for financial resources for land quality improvements.
- Provide geographical information system mapping that helps facilities meet permit compliance, improve



*DNR's Dan Cook installs a monitoring well to track reductions in nitrates in a city's well capture zone.*

consistency, reduce discrepancies, plan for flood plain uses and provide information for communities to make decisions that increase their long-term resiliency to extreme weather events.

- Provide lists of certified and licensed groundwater professionals to help the public hire qualified individuals to perform work that meets environmental conformance.
- Build and expand partnerships with environmental groups, public health, communities and industry organizations to improve understanding and management of our land and to build stewardship of Iowa’s natural resources.
- Actively manage and protect Iowa’s land and groundwater to support high quality recreational opportunities for environmental equality across the state.
- Make records for underground storage tanks and leaking underground storage tanks electronically accessible to the public and to improve dissemination of information for economic development, realty transactions and infrastructure needs.





*Children at Elliot Elementary School learn about wetland denitrification of groundwater flowing toward their city's wells. Wetland wildlife is also on the curriculum at the Source Water Protection project adjacent to their schoolyard.*

### LAND QUALITY RESPONSIBILITIES, CONT.

- Provide mapping that not only supplies information for regulatory needs, but also for citizen interests such as finding recreational areas, where public hunting is allowed, each county's rare plant and animal species, locations of animal feeding operations, drinking water sources and more.
- Ensure consistent and fair regulatory assistance.
- Help businesses and communities with special needs with technical assistance.
- Move training, information distribution, and other communication needs to electronic dissemination.
- Foster efficient permit application processes and provide opportunities for public comment on DNR's land quality programs' performance.
- Hire, retain and support a diverse and highly skilled workforce that is provided with adequate safety training, accountability, professional development, makes effective use of agency resources and performs in the public interest.



## Strategies the Land Quality Bureau Will Incorporate into Its Operations

- Continually update rules and tools to improve ways of doing things and contain potential health threats.
- Cooperatively work with stakeholders to identify and secure funding as conventional funding streams become no longer sufficient and appropriate to carry out programs with acceptable protection.
- Partner with state agencies and organizations to assist expanded business opportunities and expedite permit processing.



*Ottumwa's stormwater wetland holds floodwater upstream where it can soak slowly into the ground instead of causing damage downstream.*



*Newly created floodplain maps are delivered to Iowans through online mapping services and community leaders.*

◀ *This fuel dispenser sump will be installed with an underground petroleum storage tank. DNR regulates underground storage of regulated substances, primarily petroleum.*



# WATER QUALITY OPERATIONAL PLAN

## FISCAL YEARS 2014-2017

By helping manage water resources for quality, quantity and sustainability, the DNR helps communities and businesses grow while maintaining healthy water resources, safe drinking water, high quality recreational opportunities and a partnership of water and groundwater stewardship with Iowans across the state. The Water Quality Bureau's Operational Plan reflects the Governor's Goals for Iowa and how the DNR contributes to these goals:

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The Water Quality Bureau's responsibilities are to:

- Assist permitted facilities in meeting federal and state regulations for various water uses including human health and environmental standards.
- Collect biological information (such as aquatic insect diversity), take fish tissue samples (to test for mercury and other potential health threats), and provide accurate water monitoring data for assessment, analysis and decision making about Iowa's waters.
- Meet with stakeholders, agencies and local governments to discuss their needs, rules for adoption and effective delivery of programs.
- Protect waters of the state from natural and manmade threats, including those from storm water, treated wastewater, sewage and emergencies, including those waters with exceptional conditions, like cold water environments.
- Assist people in finding and applying for financial resources for watershed, water supply and wastewater system improvements through the State Revolving Fund and other sources.
- Update rules and develop tools to manage emerging threats; water levels in times of flooding, drought, and other challenging conditions; and ensure water is fairly allocated to its beneficial use.
- Implement certification and licensing programs to provide workers sufficient knowledge and experience to properly carry out the processes and operations at water and wastewater systems, test samples in laboratories, and inspect and clean septic systems.



## Strategies the Water Quality Bureau Will Incorporate into Its Operations

- Spread awareness of how water quality impacts Iowans' health, the environment and the economy through all water programs.
- Build and expand partnerships with environmental groups, public health agencies, communities and industry organizations to improve understanding and management of our water resources.
- Educate customers to fully utilize financing opportunities through the State Revolving Fund and other sources for water and wastewater system improvements.

### WATER QUALITY RESPONSIBILITIES, CONT.

- Make certain that DNR regulations and permit requirements are accessible, easy to understand, conform to statutory law and are effectively implemented.
- Provide consistent and fair regulatory assistance; partner with state agencies and other organizations to assist with expanded business opportunities and expedite permit processing.
- Foster the efficient application and issuance of permits.
- Train water system operators to optimize their existing facilities and practice troubleshooting; provide technical assistance to drinking water and wastewater facilities, including during emergency situations.
- Hire, support and retain a diverse and highly skilled workforce that is provided adequate professional development opportunities, safety training, accountability, and that effectively uses agency resources and performs in the public interest.
- Engage environmental agencies, landowners, communities and facilities in watershed improvement projects to gain appreciation of nature and its processes, reduce water treatment costs, decrease flooding damage, improve wildlife habitat for hunting, improve aquatic habitat for quality fishing, and attract tourism dollars.
- Provide assistance to homeowners with water wells and septic systems, including educational information on proper maintenance, sample collection, evaluation of test results, and troubleshooting.

*Water with nitrate levels above 10 milligrams per liter can be unsafe for infants to drink as it could lead to Blue Baby Syndrome (a condition that causes oxygen starvation and suffocation). Pregnant women and nursing mothers should also avoid consuming unsafe levels of nitrate.*



*DNR trains and supports IOWATER volunteers to monitor waters in their local watershed.*



*The DNR conducts certification and licensing programs for water and wastewater systems.*