

IOWATER Volunteer Awards 2007



Don Propst

IOWATER Volunteer of the Year – *Don Propst*

The IOWATER Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Don Propst from Des Moines. For several years, rivers have been the lifeblood of Don's volunteer efforts. And into these rivers, Don's blood, sweat, and tears have been shed as he's worked tirelessly to clean them up. After his first river cleanup experience in 2005, Don decided to follow his dream: to dedicate his life's work to cleaning up Iowa's rivers. Over the past three years, Don has cleaned up hundreds of miles of Iowa's streams, including 113 miles of the North Raccoon River, for which Don and his Clean Rivers Team received an award for in 2006. But cleanups are only part of Don's contributions to Iowa's rivers. As an IOWATER volunteer, he routinely monitors the quality of their waters and volunteers for snapshot sampling events. As an Iowa DNR Water Trails volunteer, he's helped build river accesses and promote the enjoyment of our state's rivers as natural trail corridors.



Donna Lutz

IOWATER Professional of the Year - *Donna Lutz*

The IOWATER Professional of the Year award was presented to Donna Lutz, program manager for the Des Moines River Water Quality Network and assistant scientist in the Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering Department at Iowa State University. For nearly 30 years, Donna has monitored the water quality of the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers and Saylorville and Red Rock reservoirs, performing thousands of water quality analyses and collecting volumes of quality data. She has demonstrated her ability to handle a broad range of responsibilities with the Des Moines River Water Quality Network, serving as its principal investigator, project manager, webmaster, and field supervisor, and she continues to maintain a strong presence in the water quality monitoring community in Iowa as she develops productive working relationships with water quality researchers at local, state, and national levels. Donna also serves as a role model and mentor to students of all ages interested in water quality, readily sharing her expertise and commitment to produce high quality data. She's been active with Iowa State University's Program for Women in Science and Engineering, as well as the Association for Women in Science. And after having monitored the Raccoon River for decades, she finally got her feet wet as a Project AWARE volunteer in 2007.



Bill Hammes and the Wilton FFA

IOWATER Classroom of the Year – *Bill Hammes and the Wilton FFA chapter*

The IOWATER Classroom of the Year award was presented to Bill Hammes and the Wilton FFA chapter, whose educational experiences extend far beyond the traditional classroom and into real-world applications. Each year, Mr. Hammes involves the Wilton FFA in a variety of projects, one of which has been the development of a 32-acre area owned by the Cedar County Conservation Board into an Outdoor Wildlife Education Area. For this project, Wilton FFA students have developed a trails system and educational outreach program they use to teach area students about IOWATER water testing with long-range plans to provide for guided elementary school tours with “Education Stations.” Thanks to their efforts, over 200 students have been involved in the water quality testing in the wildlife area. Chapter members have been recognized for their six-year tillage comparison study for being the most profitable when yield, crop price, equipment and fuel cost, and time are evaluated. Thanks to Bill Hammes’ mentoring, the Wilton FFA lives up to the organization’s mission of “making a positive difference in the lives of these young people.” Fortunately for Iowa’s natural resources, the positive differences they are making are widespread and far-reaching.



Members of the Army Aviation Support Facility #3

IOWATER Event of the Year - *Army Aviation Support Facility #3*

The IOWATER Event of the Year award was presented to the Army Aviation Support Facility #3 in Davenport, for their contribution to Upper Iowa University’s Big Rock Volga River Cleanup in the spring of 2007. To tell the story, however, one must go back to 1999 when floodwaters ravaged northeast Iowa and washed a 3,500-pound fuel supply tank into the Volga River where it was swept over a mile and a half downriver before finally coming to rest in a remote and virtually inaccessible stretch of river near Volga State Recreation Area. Eight years later, after nearly 50 Big Rock Volga River Cleanup volunteers removed over

three tons of trash from this stretch of river, the tank remained; too big to be moved by even the strongest of volunteers. But where there's a will, there's a way... On May 22, 2007, skilled pilots from the Army Aviation Support Facility #3 used a Chinook helicopter to airlift the tank from the banks of the Volga River to a salvage yard where it was recycled. The Army Aviation Support Facility #3 is no stranger to moving large objects. In March of 2006, this crew airlifted the historic Hale Bridge in Jones County 15 miles from the Olin/Hale area to Wapsipinicon State Park near Anamosa.



Amy Johanssen and Paul Lote

IOWATER Watershed Group of the Year – *Partners of Scott County Watersheds*

The IOWATER Watershed Group of the Year award was presented to Partners of Scott County Watersheds, an organization that represents a diverse group of individuals and organizations including farmers, educators, homeowners, developers, and city, county, and elected officials that formed in response to concerns about water quality throughout Scott County. As they strive to uphold their mission “to develop and implement ways all citizens can be better stewards of our watersheds,” they offer Scott County residents numerous opportunities to get involved with their watersheds. From monthly public forums that focus on local water quality and environmental issues to the bi-annual snapshot sampling event they’ve coordinated since 2002, this organization is definitely making a difference in their community. They have worked with the cities of Davenport and Bettendorf on storm water ordinances, installed signs at 120 different stream crossings throughout Scott County, and teamed up with Chad Pregracke’s Living Lands and Waters organization to conduct a “Team Up to Clean Up Duck Creek” stream cleanup event that has exploded into the wildly successful Xstream Cleanup in the Quad Cities. They have also installed a bio-retention cell for storm water at Davenport’s North High School. This cell not only treats and infiltrates storm water, but it also serves as a living lab for students. The Quad Cities area will

benefit for years to come as this group continues to educate classrooms, businesses, and residents on the importance of protecting water quality, practicing good stewardship, and developing alternatives to conventional storm water practices.