



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**July 9, 2009**

**For immediate release**

- 1. DNR tests show water safe for swimmers at Storm Lake**
- 2. water quality issues on EPC July 21 agenda**
- 3. Public invited to help set DNR legislative agenda**
- 4. River cleanup volunteers honored with national award**

## **DNR TESTS SHOW WATER SAFE FOR SWIMMERS AT STORM LAKE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Julie Sieverse at (712) 262-4177 or [julie.sievers@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:julie.sievers@dnr.iowa.gov)

**STORM LAKE** – Results of laboratory tests show that water in Storm Lake is safe for swimmers.

The DNR collected water samples at Storm Lake beaches July 6 after a brown stain appeared along portions of Storm Lake’s shoreline on Sunday and Monday. Such stains are typical of algae blooms. The stains were gone by Tuesday.

Sometimes algae can produce toxins. “So it’s wise for swimmers to avoid mats of vegetation and discolored water,” said Julie Sievers, environmental specialist at the DNR Storm Lake field office.

Although the algae type has not been confirmed, the lab results show toxin levels well below any level of concern for swimmers.

“We tested water samples from five public swimming and boat ramp areas and none of the levels we saw would be of concern,” said Sievers. “All of the test results fall into naturally occurring background levels that would normally be present in the lake during summer.”

Sievers added that it is a good idea for people to shower after swimming in a lake or river.

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## **WATER QUALITY ISSUES ON EPC JULY 21 AGENDA**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Jerah Gallinger at (515) 313-8909 or [jerah.gallinger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:jerah.gallinger@dnr.iowa.gov)**

DES MOINES – The Environmental Protection Commission will be asked to rule on two updates to water quality standards at their July 21 meeting in Windsor Heights.

Up for commissioners’ final approval is a proposal to reclassify the attainable level of water quality on 128 stream sections after DNR staff assessed them.

The EPC will also be asked to approve moving forward with a change in the state’s draft antidegradation policy, a policy that sets minimum requirements to protect water quality. Specifically, this proposal would revise an initial list of Outstanding Iowa Waters. The draft policy also includes a public nomination process for adding waters to the list in the future.

The meeting will be held at 10 a.m. at the DNR Air Quality Building at 7900 Hickman Road in Windsor Heights. The meeting is open to the public and public participation is scheduled for 10:30 a.m.

A demand for a hearing from Van Buren County regarding a draft construction permit is on the agenda for 1 p.m. A presentation on the Iowa Drainage and Wetland Landscape Systems Initiative for reducing cropland nutrients reaching water resources is scheduled for 2 p.m.

The complete agenda follows:

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Director’s Remarks
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 133, Rules for Determining Cleanup Actions and Responsible Parties
- Region XII Council of Governments as a Grant Awardee for the Iowa Waste Exchange

- Final Rule – Chapter 101 – Solid Waste Comprehensive Planning Requirements
- Contract – Upper Mississippi River Basin Association for Upper Mississippi River Clean Water Act Planning and Coordination
- Amended Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 61 – Water Quality Standards (Antidegradation Policy and Implementation Procedures)
- Final Rule – Chapter 61 – Water Quality Standards (Stream Reclassifications via Use Assessment and Use Attainability Analyses)
- Demand for Hearing – Van Buren County – Steve Robinson
- Monthly Reports
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Month’s Meeting
  - Aug. 18 – Moravia
  - Sept. 15 – Windsor Heights

Look for more information on the DNR Web site under “Commissions and Boards” at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

The members of the commission are Charlotte Hubbell, chair, Des Moines; Marty Stimson, vice-chair, Cedar Rapids; Carrie La Seur, secretary, Mount Vernon; David Petty, Eldora; Susan Heathcote, Des Moines; Paul Johnson, Decorah, Eugene Ver Steeg, Inwood; and Dale Cochran, Urbandale. The director of the DNR is Richard Leopold.

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## **PUBLIC INVITED TO HELP SET DNR LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Jerah Gallinger at (515) 313-8909 or [jerah.gallinger@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:jerah.gallinger@dnr.iowa.gov)**

DES MOINES – The DNR is asking the public to provide suggestions on natural resource issues to develop the agency’s 2010 legislative agenda.

Anyone with an interest in the state of our natural resources is invited to attend. “I’d like to invite everyone from hunters to industry representatives, conservation groups to retailers who depend upon recreational opportunities for their livelihood,” said Richard Leopold, DNR director.

“We know that Iowa’s natural resources are key to vital industries like agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and power generation. How we treat those resources today determines what kind of legacy we leave for the future,” Leopold said. “This forum is for anyone with a stake in our air, land and water and the other natural resources they support.”

The Stakeholder Legislative Forum will be held July 30. Participants will meet from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the DNR air quality office, 7900 Hickman Road in Windsor Heights.

A common theme that emerged in last year's forum was the need for ongoing funding as the state faced budget shortfalls. Forum participants identified funding needed for planning, protecting and maintaining state lands and infrastructure, expanding recreational opportunities, education and enforcement.

“Again this year, we are interested in hearing from people about the issues that they believe the DNR should prioritize as we care for our environment and natural resources,” said Leopold.

Participants can expect the same format as last year with a brief introduction from the DNR director, followed by splitting into small groups to discuss proposals for environmental and conservation concerns.

Attendees will spend the last part of the meeting reporting their recommendations to the larger group. Then, they will discuss how to incorporate the recommendations into the DNR's legislative agenda.

About 80 people provided input at the forum last year. Their concerns ranged from air quality to recreational use of snowmobiles—from water quality to enforcement of illegal dumping laws.

For more information about the forum, contact Jerah Gallinger at (515) 313-8909.

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## **RIVER CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS HONORED WITH NATIONAL AWARD**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Brian Soenen at [Brian.Soenen@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Brian.Soenen@dnr.iowa.gov) or (515) 205-8587.

DES MOINES – Since its 2003 beginning, hundreds of Iowans have volunteered to exchange vacation days for an opportunity to help clean Iowa's rivers as part of Project AWARE.

On July 17, their efforts will be recognized in Washington, D.C., when Project AWARE will be presented with a 2009 Take Pride in America National Award. The ceremony will take place at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The DNR's annual volunteer river cleanup event, Project AWARE stands for A Watershed Awareness River Expedition. Volunteers participate by paddling the river in a canoe or kayak and cleaning up river trash along the way.

Take Pride in America is a national partnership program authorized by Congress to promote the appreciation and stewardship of public lands, including parks, forests, historic sites and schools. Each year, a panel of judges selects award winners from hundreds of qualified nominations representing outstanding examples of stewardship across the country. This year, there are 15 national award winners, representing projects and events in 11 states and the District of Columbia.

"It is an incredible privilege to honor this outstanding group of award winners. They each embody the mission of the Take Pride in America program, and are examples to us all of what it means to be good stewards of our public lands," said Lisa Young, acting executive director for Take Pride in America. "This is one way we can say 'Thank you,' for the work they have done."

In the seven-year history of Project AWARE, the expedition has scored an impressive track record, enlisting 1,500 participants, cleaning up more than 513 river miles, and removing more than 1,800 cubic yards of trash and recycling 78 percent of it. Volunteers have also restored native prairie, renovated trails and enhanced recreational areas.

"Whether you clean up litter in a local park or help build a Continental Divide trail, you're creating a legacy for our children and our grandchildren. Take it from me, you'll feel better for it," says Take Pride in America National Spokesman Clint Eastwood.

Six-year Project AWARE veteran John Pearson agrees, "Project AWARE is fun and educational in many ways. It is also gratifying to feel that the river is left a better place for your effort."

For more information on Take Pride in America or Project AWARE, please visit [www.takepride.gov](http://www.takepride.gov) or [www.iowaprojectaware.com](http://www.iowaprojectaware.com).