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DNR PROVIDES A LOOK BACK IN TIME

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Aerial photos from the 1930s, 1950s and 2000s are available. Also available as jpgs upon special request.

DES MOINES – Whether you are searching for a business location or tracking down family history, the DNR's latest aerial photo postings can help flesh out what happened back in the 1950s.

Dominated by the Cold War, baby boomers and an explosion of technological advances following World War II, the '50s saw a rapid rise in affluence and consumerism in the U.S.

Now Iowans can discover accompanying changes on the landscape. Find out if a local business existed in the '50s or the interstate highway had replaced your grandparents' farm. It's all there on the 1950s aerial photos posted in late August to the DNR's Web site.

"These photos aren't just for history buffs," said Kathyne Clark, DNR's project manager. "They can be used by businesses planning to develop an area or by scientists studying river changes."

Environmental and legal records typically don't indicate land uses that could have an environmental impact today. The photos can help determine the extent of old open dumps,

landfills or chemical storage areas – information that sometimes just can't be found anywhere else.

Co-worker Nate Hoogeveen who runs the DNR's Water Trails program, uses the aerials to look at changes in river channels over many decades – helping to predict future channel evolutions. "This information is very helpful as we design restored channels to replace a low-head dam," he said.

Clark says the '50s photos provide one more decade documenting changes since the 1930s photo record. "There was no conservation coverage done until the late '40s, because of the war," she said. "So these statewide aerials provide an important timeframe and window to the past for those looking for historical information."

The photos can be used by anyone with access to a computer and the Internet. No special software is required. But for engineers, like Ryan Peterson, a project manager at H.R. Green, the photos are invaluable.

"They are great to show what's been happening at a property over the last 70 years," he said. Peterson examines the photos when conducting Phase I Environmental Sites Assessments. This tool is great for evaluating past uses of properties that may or may not have recognized environmental conditions associated with them. "I use the photos to get a good idea of when the property was first developed and if the use was residential, commercial or industrial," he said. Best of all, the photos are "instantaneous and it's free."

Fred Hawley of Phoenix, Ariz., said the maps are a way for him to be in Iowa without being in Iowa. A self-avowed "map nut," Hawley likes to look at his home town of Laurens to see how it's changed.

His favorite destinations include the 1930s photos of Johnson County before Coralville Reservoir was built and recent photos of Dallas County. "I like to look at how and where cities grow," he said. "Like Des Moines, where many square miles west of Des Moines have developed into suburbs since 2002."

Find instructions and the photos under Mapping on the DNR homepage at www.iowadnr.gov. Or, find them directly under the Basic Map and Aerial Photography Viewer at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/mapping/index.html>. The photos are also available on the Iowa State University Orthoserver at <http://ortho.gis.iastate.edu>.

Technical users with specialized software can find the photos on the Natural Resources Geographic Information System library at <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/nrgislib/>.

It took DNR staff about one year to collect and process the 1950s photos. In contrast, it took about five years to assemble the aerial photos from the 1930s – the earliest fly-over of Iowa.

Clark attributes that to an experienced staff. The photos were also more accessible, which meant DNR did not have to purchase as many from the National Archives. “Thanks also should go to the Department of Transportation, Iowa State University and the Natural Resources Conservation Service,” she said.

The DNR received more than \$45,000 through a Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP) grant to convert the photos to a geographic information system format that can be used on the Internet. Continued funding from the Brownfield Re-development Grant covered much of the remaining cost.

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DNR DIRECTOR’S PUBLIC FORUM HEADS TO CLEAR LAKE STATE PARK IN CERRO GORDO COUNTY

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CLEAR LAKE– DNR Director Richard Leopold will hold a public forum at Clear Lake State Park main lodge in Clear Lake on Thursday.

Richard Leopold, director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, is holding forums across the state again this year to discuss natural resource issues with Iowans.

“I really look forward to hearing from Iowa’s citizens. Last year, we got great feedback and ideas from more than 300 attendees,” said Leopold about the seven forums held last year. “Our relationship with Iowans is something we highly value within the DNR and we will work together on the things most affecting our natural resources.”

Each public forum begins at 6 p.m. with Director Leopold outlining the DNR’s top priorities, the environmental report card, providing an update on budget cuts and discussing local issues. Another hour-and-a-half will be devoted to answering questions from the public.

Director Leopold has hosted more than 200 people at forums at Honey Creek Resort, Dolliver, Macbride, Bellevue and Lake of Three Fires state parks so far this summer.

Upcoming public forums scheduled for Leopold are as follows, listed alphabetically by city:

Clear Lake

Clear Lake State Park Lodge
Thursday, Sept. 17, 6 p.m.

Council Bluffs

Hitchcock Nature Center
Wednesday, Sept. 30, 6 p.m.

Sioux City

Stone State Park Lodge
Thursday, Sept. 24, 6 p.m.

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