



IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION | WWW.IOWADNR.GOV/NEWS/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCTOBER 6, 2009

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[Electronic photo available upon request]

YOUTH DUCK HUNTING ADVENTURE BRINGS KIDS OUTDOORS

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Although it was more than five minutes into legal shooting time, the skies above Rice Lake remained nearly pitch black. The weatherman's "Thirty percent chance of scattered showers" was becoming four hours of steady rainfall and the predawn temperature was on a downhill slide. A sudden gust of wind grabbed a nearby tree branch and slapped it across my face, providing an instant reminder of how eye glasses can become a real hindrance on rainy autumn days.

In spite of the bone chilling weather, enthusiasm among the official 2009 participants of Iowa's Youth Duck Hunting Adventure remained high. Staged during last weekend's kids only, youth duck season, the Youth Adventure is an all expenses paid, everything provided, fully guided hunt aimed at recruiting new blood into the sport of waterfowl hunting. On this

year's soggy Saturday opener, my son Matt and I had teamed up to share our blind and serve as mentors to Kaleb Froiland of Clear Lake and Colton Skarpohl-ost of Buffalo Center, a budding pair of 12-year-old, first time duck hunters.

We had all gotten acquainted the previous afternoon as youths and volunteer mentors from across northern Iowa assembled at Worth County's Keenan's Quarry Park. Friday night activities included an introduction to the history and traditions of waterfowl hunting, safe gun handling instruction, and a trip to the shooting range for a go at fast moving clay targets. The evening concluded as youths received free Ducks Unlimited duck calls, caps, and their own personal set of brand new, in the box duck decoys.

According to DNR Conservation Officer and event organizer, Matt Washburn, Iowa's Youth Duck Hunting Adventure is designed to provide youngsters with the firsthand opportunity to experience the thrill of waterfowl hunting and all its trappings. Held in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, the outing is designed to educate youngsters on waterfowl and wetland conservation and to ultimately recruit new, lifelong hunters into the sport.

"The generation that grew up with hunting and fishing as part of their daily lifestyle is rapidly disappearing and, as is the case elsewhere in our nation, Iowa hunter numbers are showing an alarming decline," says Washburn. "Waterfowl hunting is a sport that is very traditional and is something that is usually passed from generation to generation.

"But not everyone has that opportunity today," said Washburn. "Kids are extremely busy with lots of competition for free time. An increasing number of young people never even make it to the outdoors. Mentored waterfowl youth hunts are one way to provide them with that experience. Hopefully, they'll like what they see, have some fun, and will come back for more."

According to Ducks Unlimited Regional Director and event cosponsor, Mike Heller, mentored duck hunts are right on target when it comes to introducing young people to the art of waterfowl hunting and instilling the importance of wildlife and wetlands conservation.

"This event is all about kids. It's about getting young people involved in duck hunting and teaching them respect for the outdoors," says Heller. "Duck hunting is largely about traditions, and one of the things we're trying to do is pass those traditions on to the youths of today. I don't think there's a better way to accomplish that than by actually getting the kids into the field for that firsthand experience."

Following a short night's sleep, we put the youth plan to action with a 5 a.m. rendezvous at the parking lot boat ramp. Our party had decided to hunt wood ducks. Launching the flat bottom, we headed for a cluster of oak studded islands. Acorns are the wood duck's favorite breakfast item, and the banks and shorelines were holding plenty. So many, in fact, that stepping onto the islands was like walking into a room full of marbles.

After selecting a likely bay, the boys' new decoys were tossed out in what we hoped would be an alluring formation. Once the spread was in place there was little to do but wait and listen.

"Oh man, I am so excited." The sound had come from somewhere inside the hood of Colton Skarpohl-ost's camouflaged rain parka. "This is just the coolest thing I've ever done by

a long shot. This has already been such an exciting hunt --- this really beats everything," he added.

"What in the world," I thought to myself. "If the kid is this pumped now, what's he going to be like when we can actually see something?"

My thoughts were cut short by the noisy arrival of the morning's first flock of wood ducks. There was a sharp whistle of wings as the birds hit the brakes, followed by loud swooshing sounds as the ducks splashed in among the decoys. Then, as if to cap things off, two of the ducks simultaneously emitted the high pitched shriek that is the unique, signature call of the female wood duck. After lingering near the decoys for a minute or two, the flock swan off and disappeared into the half light.

The reluctant dawn finally arrived, and with the increasing daylight came more flocks of wood ducks. The boys could safely see to shoot now, and the practice on the trap range appeared to pay off. Upon receiving permission to fire, Kaleb Froiland bagged a prime drake wood duck with his very first shot at his very first duck. A minute later, Colton bagged his first woodie.

The ducks kept coming and the action was brisk. There were hits, and there were misses. In spite of continued rain, the boys were obviously having fun; eating donuts, laughing and chattering like monkeys between flocks. Before long, Kaleb has collected his limit of three wood ducks --- all prime drakes.

"I can't believe it," he exclaimed. "My very first duck hunt and I've got my very own limit of wood ducks. I can't believe this really happened. Everything is so beautiful."

Shortly after bagging a second woodie for himself, Colton finished his duck hunt by collecting a turbo charged blue-winged teal that had committed the fatal error of returning for a second look at the boys' new decoys.

Time flies when you're hunting ducks. Before we knew it, it was time to pick up the decoys and head back to headquarters for a platter of scrambled eggs and to compare notes with other youth parties and their mentors.

"This has been the funest morning of my whole life," said Colton. "Everything was so exciting --- I'm still shaking just thinking about it. I never knew that this is what duck hunting was like. I've got to get my Dad out here for this. I want to see it all again."

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STATE PARKS TO BEGIN SHUTTING OFF WATER

Iowa's state parks are busy preparing for the first freezing temperatures of the fall and many will be shutting off their water and closing shower houses after this weekend.

"The cold weather moving in this weekend has pushed up the date when we normally begin to shut off our water," said Kevin Szcodronski, chief of State Parks for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Campers can check the status of water in a particular park

by going to the parks reservation system at www.reserveiaparks.com and clicking on the Park Notices/Reservation Closures link. The information is updated regularly by park staff.

Parks in the process of turning off water include Clear Lake, the Gull Point complex, and Lake Manawa. Big Creek State Park is also shutting off water to its facilities. Most parks will be shutting off water beginning the week of Oct. 12 and the remainder on Oct. 19. Szcodronski said if campers have any questions about water or other facilities during the time of their stay, they should contact the park directly.

Once the water is turned off, the campground dump station is also closed. "We have a number of fall campers who visit our parks after the water is off and they will need to find an alternative location to dump their trailers or motor homes," he said.

Iowa state park campgrounds are open all year long.

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FALL IS PRIME TIME FOR FISHING IOWA TROUT

DECORAH, Iowa – Northeast Iowa draws thousands of anglers from across the state to its cold water streams and excellent trout fishing. But anglers can expect to see a few more non residents sharing the stream in Iowa's Trout County because on September 30, Wisconsin and Minnesota stream trout seasons were closed.

"We get a lot of anglers from Milwaukee and other parts of Wisconsin, from Illinois and from Minnesota," said Bill Kalishek, fisheries biologist at Decorah for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "They come here because we have excellent number of wild trout as well as plenty of stocked trout, and excellent, high quality streams."

The quality of Iowa streams continues to improve. As recently as 25 years ago, only six streams had good enough water quality to support natural reproduction of trout. Since then, there has been a large effort to improve land use in watersheds, improve stream habitat, and create partnerships with landowners, government agencies and other local groups to improve water quality. Today, there are 34 streams with consistent natural trout reproduction.

He recommended four areas where a number of quality trout streams are in close proximity to each other, have good access, and have lots of fish.

The Highlandville/Dorchester area has Waterloo Creek, French Creek, North Bear and South Bear creeks. Near Marquette/McGregor, Big Paint, Little Paint, Bloody Run and Sny Magill are good streams. Around Manchester, fish Spring Branch, Bailey's Ford, Richmond Springs and the Maquoketa River. In the Dubuque area, try Bankston, Little Mill, Little Turkey River and Swiss Valley for quality trout fishing.

"The further into the fall you go, the less fishing pressure you will see on these streams," Kalishek said. And the streams further north from Hwy. 20, have fewer people fishing as well.

The technique to catch trout in the fall is pretty straightforward. Whatever spinning tackle worked in the summer should work in the fall. Fly fishing anglers can continue with the summer/fall hatch flies, but should change to wet flies, streamers or nymphs, later in the fall.

Iowa does not have a closed season for trout fishing. The announced and unannounced stream stockings continue through October. The stocking hotline is 563-927-5736. Nonresidents can purchase a one day [\$9], three day [\$16], seven day [\$30.50] or annual [\$39.50] license, and the required fee [\$13.50] to fish for trout. The trout fee is good for the remainder of the year. More trout fishing information is available on the Iowa DNR's website www.iowadnr.gov.

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IOWA FISHERIES EXPERTS SHARE BEST FALL FISHING SPOTS THROUGH INTERACTIVE WEB MAP

One of Iowa's best kept secrets is the excellent fishing that takes place here each fall season. Now, the secret of *where* to fish this time of year is easier to access in a new interactive map created by the Iowa DNR.

The map features more than 50 top fishing spots, identified by DNR fisheries experts. By clicking on a point on the map, web visitors can find details on where to fish, types of fish to be caught, and tips to be successful.

"We often hear that people wish they knew the best places to fish, and we hope this type of map is helpful," said Joe Larscheid, chief of DNR fisheries. "We have hundreds of lakes, ponds and streams in Iowa, and fishing this time is a great opportunity for both new and expert anglers."

According to Larscheid, chief of DNR fisheries, cooler temperatures spur fish to eat in preparation for the upcoming winter season. That means fish are active this time of year, and it is second only to early spring for catching fish.

The map, created using Google™, can be found at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/fish/map.html>

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Contact: Jason McGrann, Honey Creek Resort State Park, (877) 677-3344, mail to: JasonM@honeycreekresort.com

JOIN THE FALL CYCLING FESTIVAL THIS WEEKEND AT HONEY CREEK

RESORT

MORAVIA, Iowa – Join cycling friends from around the Midwest this weekend, October 9-11, for a Fall Cycling Festival. The weekend event is sponsored by Bike World of Des Moines and is open to everyone.

“What makes the Fall Cycling Festival so special is the state park setting and beautiful scenery.” says Jason McGrann, sales manager for Honey Creek Resort. “Riders of all abilities will find this a fun and exciting event.”

The Kick-off Party for the Festival takes place at the lakeside terrace fireside ring at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, with music by Matt McNeece and his guitar. Also on Friday, from 7 to 9 p.m., riders can take part in a night mountain bike ride leaving every 30 minutes from the main lodge entrance.

On Saturday, mountain bikers can join the Midwest Gravel Road Marathon Championship competition, a 100-mile gravel road ride/race or take part in the Metric Century Gravel Road Ride. Registration begins at 6 a.m. and continental breakfast will be available for registrants from 5 to 7 a.m.

The festival will also include a range of activities for recreational mountain bikers, non-riders and families, including an evening dinner with entertainment and awards.

Finish the weekend with Sunday Fun Day. Head out to the lake and take a 35-mile scenic road bike and gravel road tour.

Bring the kids! They can take part in the kids’ trail ride on Saturday at 11 a.m.; after the ride take a dip in the pirate-themed Buccaneer Bay Indoor Water Park.

Guests will also enjoy playing a round or two at the Preserve Golf Course. The bent-grass tees and greens are stunning and golfers are treated to long views of breathtaking prairie. The course has a full driving range, putting green and Club Car golf carts equipped with GPS.

You can find more information on the Fall Cycling Festival at www.honeycreekresort.com or call Dave Mable with Bike World at (515) 255-7047 or email: dave@bikeworldiowa.com.

For more information on special events, packages and DNR interpretive programs, go to www.honeycreekresort.com or call (877) 677-3344.

About Honey Creek Resort State Park

Honey Creek Resort State Park offers 105 guest rooms and suites, Twenty-eight luxury guest cabins, a 6,500 sq. ft. indoor/outdoor convention space, 18-hole championship golf course, 15,000 sq. ft. indoor water park, dining, RV Park and a variety of exciting outdoor adventures with interpretive programs and activities.

Driving directions:

Located on Rathbun Lake in Appanoose County, Honey Creek Resort is just 20 minutes north

of Centerville, 35 minutes southwest of Ottumwa and 95 miles southeast of Des Moines. Visitors can get there by taking Highway 5 to Moravia and turning west on County Road J18.

From Des Moines: From Interstate 35 south of Des Moines, take Highway 5 southeast through Albia. Turn west (right) at Moravia onto County Road J18. Turn left (south) on 185th Ave.

From southern Iowa and Missouri: Take Highway 5 north through Centerville. Turn west (left) onto County Road J18. Turn left (south) on 185th Ave.

From Interstate 80 (Iowa City): Take Highway 218/Exit 239 south from Iowa City. Turn west (right) onto Highway 34. Turn south (left) Albia onto Highway 5. Turn west (right) at Moravia onto County Road J18. Turn left (south) on 185th Ave.

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MIDDLE AND SOUTH RACCOON RIVER WATER TRAIL DEDICATED OCTOBER 10

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will designate the Middle & South Raccoon River Water Trail at noon on Saturday, October 10, in Redfield.

“These corridors are some of Iowa’s best places for recreation, from wildlife viewing and fishing, to canoeing, kayaking, or tubing,” said Chris Adkins, environmental education coordinator for Dallas County Conservation. The dedication will take place at Hanging Rock Park, and an organized 8-mile excursion from Redfield Access to Pleasant Valley Access will take place at 1 p.m. Registration for the excursion is required – call 515-465-3577 to register.

“This is the eighth water trail designation this year,” said John Wenck, river programs outreach coordinator. “Iowa’s rivers are getting some attention that has been long overdue.”

“The Middle and South Raccoon river valley is probably one of the most lauded in central Iowa,” noted Robin Fortney, founder of Central Iowa Paddlers. “It’s exciting that this trail segment is now complete and will offer guidance to river users and foster a greater appreciation for these popular rivers,” she said.

For more information on Iowa water trails, see www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/.

Media Contact: John Wenck, river programs outreach coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources at 515-281-8969

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LAKE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT SENDS TROUT FROM ANKENY TO BONDURANT

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will move its cool weather trout stocking from DMACC Lake in Ankeny to Lake Petoka, along Hwy. 65 in Bondurant, for this season while the DMACC Pond undergoes a lake improvement project. The trout stocking will return to DMACC in the fall of 2010.

Lake Petoka is 10 miles east of the Ankeny DMACC campus and will receive about 1,500 catchable rainbow trout on November 24, at noon. These trout are typically willing to bite so it is a great opportunity to introduce kids and families to fishing.

Trout fishing at DMACC Lake has been a popular addition to the winter trout stocking program. Once the work on the DMACC Lake is complete, the lake should offer better water quality, better fishing and have an extended lifespan. The project requires the lake water level to be lowered this winter.

DMACC Lake was built in 1982 and collects water runoff from 1,100 acres of agricultural, residential and commercial property north and east of the Ankeny campus. This runoff contains heavy sediment loads and high levels of nutrients which cause the lake to silt in and experience accelerated algae blooms. One common source of the nutrients is lawn and agricultural fertilizer.

Cost of the project will be offset by a \$500,000 grant from the Watershed Improvement Review Board.

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TIME TO RENEW SNOWMOBILE, ATV REGISTRATIONS

The renewal period for registering ATVs and snowmobiles runs from Sept. 1 through Dec. 31. ATVs and snowmobiles can be registered through an Electronic Licensing System of Iowa (ELSI) vendor or any county recorder.

If the machine was ever registered through ELSI, it can be renewed through ELSI this year. Machines which are not currently in ELSI will need to be registered through the county recorder. A list of ELSI vendors can be found at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/cs/files/elsivendors.pdf>.

Specific questions about registration renewals should be directed to the county recorder in the county of residence.

It is not a routine practice of county recorders to send renewal notices. Renewals are considered late as Jan 1, 2010.

For more information about registering snowmobiles, go to <http://www.iowadnr.gov/law/snowmobile/registration.html>. For more information about registering ATVs, go to <http://www.iowadnr.gov/law/atv/registration.html>.

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Public input effort begins with on-line survey **PARKS GROUP WANTS YOUR OPINION**

DES MOINES – The Iowa Parks Foundation is asking park users and members of the general public to share their opinions about recent experiences in Iowa’s parks.

“Before this new organization jumps into comprehensive planning for ‘green infrastructure’ or begins a major fund-raising campaign; we want to understand how parks are used today and Iowans’ expectations for the future,” says Kent Sovern, Executive Director of the Parks Foundation.

The on-line survey is the first step in a citizen engagement process that will include community meetings that will be scheduled around the state in the late fall and early winter. The Foundation will host community forums as well as smaller targeted focus groups in each region of the state.

“We have designed an online assessment tool to help identify recreational interests, patterns of park use, quality and condition of state park facilities and user priorities for park improvements for the future,” Sovern said. “With broad-based citizen and community input, we hope to create an action plan that preserves, enhances and transforms the recreational and natural resources environment throughout Iowa.”

To participate in the survey, visit the Foundation’s web site at www.iaparks.org and click on the IPF logo on the right hand side of the page. It will take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete the survey.

About the Iowa Parks Foundation

In the summer of 2008, former Governor Terry Branstad and former Congressman Neal Smith joined to recruit a founding Board of Directors and formed the Iowa Parks Foundation. The Foundation’s mission is to strengthen the connection between Iowa’s people and their parks by serving as an independent voice to advocate a new vision for Iowa’s parks. The Foundation cultivates stewardship through environmental education and research, advocates for adequate funding of park programs and infrastructure improvement, increases the number of park users and improves the quality of visitor experiences in Iowa’s state parks.

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For more information, contact Melissa Speed, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at 515-281-8650.

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION TO MEET OCTOBER 8 AT HONEY CREEK RESORT STATE PARK

MORAVIA – The Natural Resource Commission of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will meet at 8:30 a.m., Oct. 8, at Honey Creek Resort State Park, Ballroom C, 12633 Resort Drive, near Moravia.

Commission and DNR staff will meet at 1 p.m., Oct. 7, at Honey Creek Resort State Park for a tour of the area. The commission will have dinner at 6 p.m. at the Lakeshore Grill at Honey Creek Resort State Park. The tour and the meeting are open to the public.

Members of the commission are Kim Francisco, Elizabeth Garst, Gregory Drees, Janelle Rettig and Tammi Kircher. The Director of the DNR is Richard Leopold.

The following is the agenda for the October meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of Sept. 10
- Director's Remarks
- Honey Creek Resort State Park Update
- Construction Projects
 - Rathbun Fish Hatchery, Appanoose County – Start Tank Dark Room
 - Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo County – Harbor Inn Fishing Jetty
 - Lost Island, Palo Alto County – Submerged Rock Reef
- Small Construction Projects Contracts
- Land Acquisition Projects
 - Clear Lake Spoil Site, Cerro Gordo County – Broers Revocable Trust
 - Albright Canoe Access, Hamilton County – Haren Revocable Trust
 - Aldo Leopold WMA, Bremer County – Cousin, Coonradt and Corson
 - Bridges WMA, Bremer County – Meyer and Kohlman
 - Lost Grove Lake, Scott County – Bruce and Emmy Lou Dexter
 - Lost Grove Lake, Scott County – Dale and Jill Grunwald
- Land Management Projects
 - Land Conveyance, Pottawattamie County - Council Bluffs Riverfront
- REAP Private Public Cost-share Grants
- REAP City Parks and Open Space Grants
- REAP County Conservation Board Grants

- Cultural Resource Evaluation Contract with the University of Iowa
- Chapter 94, Nonresident Deer Hunting – Final Rule
- Chapter 98, Wild Turkey Spring Hunting – Final Rule
- Chapter 99, Wild Turkey Fall Hunting by Residents – Final Rule
- Chapter 106, Deer Hunting by Residents – Final Rule
- Amendment to Existing Agreement with Ducks Unlimited for Wetland Restoration and Enhancement
- Glenwood Archaeological State Preserve Dedication
- Contract with Iowa State University for Hickory Grove Water Quality Improvement Plan
- Honey Creek Resort State Park Activities Building Agreement with Iowa State University
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Meeting, Nov. 12, Delaware County

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