

## Water Quality Standards Rules Now in Effect Legislature Provides Funding

By Neila Seaman, Director

The water quality standards rules, as approved by the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC), went into effect this spring when the Administrative Rules Review Committee (ARRC), a legislative oversight committee, chose not to take any action. As a result, the rules became effective March 22. The ARRC could have placed a legislative hold on the rules that would prevent them from taking effect until the legislature passed a bill that would impact the rules.

The Legislature, at the request of Gov. Vilsack, provided \$18 million in funding for water quality projects. Of that amount, \$9 million would be earmarked for lake dredging with \$5 million to be determined by last year's newly legislated Water Improvement Review board and \$4 million to help communities comply with the new water quality standards rules.

However, the legislature unanimously passed SF 2363, a bill that Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club opposed and requested veto consideration by the Governor. Chapter Lobbyist Lyle Krewson reported last spring in this newsletter that the Senate had introduced Senate Study Bill SSB 3069. The bill – eventually renamed SF 2363 – included five sections, most of which Sierra Club adamantly opposed.

For example, the bill states, "... A water of the state shall be a designated stream segment when any one of the following is met..." The bill lists three criteria that follow that introduction. Sierra Club's concern is that a court of law will strictly interpret those three as the only times a stream segment could be designated. This is contrary to the intent of the Clean Water Act which requires that all existing aquatic life and recreational uses must be protected at all places and at all times. To close this loophole we requested that an additional statement be added to this section: "... The federal Water Pollution Control Act and its implementing regulations require protection of the uses specified in section 101(a)(2) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act." This suggested change was rejected without a vote because it was determined no changes would be made to the amendment that weren't technical – and this request was not considered technical.

According to the bill, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to "publish a list of all designated stream segments that receive a permitted discharge for which a UAA of recreational use and aquatic life has not yet been completed" by December 31, 2006. The DNR must then complete a UAA "for all newly designated stream segments that receive a permitted discharge" by December 31, 2007. The Sierra Club is concerned that there are no consequences included in the event the department doesn't complete the required UAAs by the December 2007 deadline. We are concerned that permittees will be allowed to continue to operate for many years under their old permit limits, in many cases unprotective of the existing aquatic life and recreational uses, until the DNR does complete the task. Under extenuating circumstances, the Clean Water Act does allow facilities to operate under the terms of expired permits, but the intent is for these extensions to be weeks or months.

This legislation will allow hundreds of facilities to discharge for years at levels that are presumptively and probably not protective while the UAA process, starved of funding, proceeds at a snail's pace. This violates the intent of the Clean Water Act and the public review, comment, and recourse provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. To close this loophole we had requested adding language that would require an operation permit that expires before a UAA is performed to remain in effect without allowing the department to renew the permit until a use attainability analysis is completed or by December 31, 2007, whichever is earlier. This language was also rejected.

Finally, language about issuing variances concerns us because the DNR currently does not submit variances to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval

although the EPA believes that is necessary. DNR has instead assumed the authority granted under Iowa's general "variances to departmental rules" policies and proposes to apply those rules in the issuance of federal NPDES permits in a manner specifically proscribed by EPA. (This has already happened at least once, and has caught the attention of EPA). The language adopted in SF2363 simply codifies the illegal practices and sets Iowa on a collision course with EPA. In a letter to Iowa DNR received Dec. 4, 2002, EPA clearly stated the protocols IDNR must follow when issuing NPDES permits with limits calculated using variances from Iowa water quality standards. Most of the following EPA specified requirements for variances are violated or ignored by the SF2363 variance language:

- The specific variance must be adopted into State WQS and approved by EPA prior to its use for all CWA purposes, including the use of the variance as a basis for an effluent limitation in a NPDES permit.
- The variance must be subject to public notice, opportunity for comment, and public hearing.
- The variance must be granted for a specific period of time, *not exceeding three years*, and must be rejustified upon expiration.
- The discharger either must meet the standard upon the expiration of this time period or must make a new demonstration of "unattainability."
- During the variance period, reasonable progress must be made toward meeting the standard

It is probable that EPA will not formally take action against Iowa until DNR begins using unapproved variances in the issuance of NPDES permits; perhaps not until the substance of the variance (for example the duration) actually exceeds the limits allowed by EPA. However, EPA has requested a meeting with DNR to discuss the variance issue, among others.

The fourth section of the bill establishes a Water Quality Planning Task Force (originally named Water Quality Trading Task Force). The task force is required to report to the Legislature by June 30, 2008, its recommendations for a voluntary statewide water quality program that meet goals outlined in the bill. These goals include:

- Improving water quality and optimizing the costs of voluntarily achieving and maintaining water quality standards.

- Creating economic incentives for voluntary nonpoint source load reductions, point source discharge reductions beyond those required by the federal Clean Water Act, implementation of pollution prevention programs, wetland restoration and creation, and the development of emerging pollution control technologies.

- Facilitating the implementation of total maximum daily loads, urban stormwater control programs, and nonpoint source management practices required or authorized under the Clean Water Act. The DNR is still required to develop a total maximum daily load for waters that do not meet water quality standards as required by section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act or to delay implementation of a total maximum daily load that has been approved by the department and the director.

- Providing incentives for the development of new and more accurate and reliable pollution control quantification protocols and procedures.

- Providing greater flexibility through community-based, nonregulatory, and performance-driven watershed management planning.

Task force voting members include one representative each from the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities, the Iowa League of Cities, the Iowa Association of Business and Industry, the Iowa Water Pollution Control Association, the Iowa Rural Water Association, Growing Green Communities, the Iowa Environmental Council, the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, the Iowa Corn Growers Association, the Iowa Soybean Association, the Iowa Pork Producers Council, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Iowa, the department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship as selected by the secretary of Agriculture, the DNR as selected by the director, and two members selected by the Iowa Conservation Alliance. Nonvoting members of the task force will include two members of the Senate with one senator appointed by the republican leader of the Senate and one senator appointed by the democratic leader of the Senate; and two members of the House of Representatives with one member appointed by the speaker of the House and one member appointed by the House minority leader.

The final section provided a place mark for financial assistance for disadvantaged communities that ultimately resulted in a \$4 million allocation.

### Iowa Chapter Endorses Ed Fallon in Governor's Race

Please see page 8 for complete article on endorsement.

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## IOWA SIERRA CLUB AWARDS

Iowa Chapter honors activists and volunteers for their efforts to protect the environment. Please consider nominating someone for an award. Winners will be presented with their award at the 2006 annual dinner.

**Deadline for nominations is August 31, 2006**

The nomination must include:

Award Category

Name of nominee

Address and phone number of nominee

Statement of why you think the nominee should receive the award

Your name, address and phone number.

If it is a group nomination give the name of a contact person. The Chapter Executive Committee will review nominations and nominations received after the deadline may not be considered.

**Submit nominations by Email if possible to jrclark@radiks.net or to iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org or by mail to Jane R. Clark, 9871 Lincoln Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50325.**

### Award Categories

• **Distinguished Service** - For a Club member who has shown service to the Club over a number of years. This is the Iowa Chapter's highest award.

• **Activist Award** - For a member who has served the Club in any capacity during the past year in a way that greatly promoted the goals and purposes of the Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club.

• **Business Service Award** - For a business or individual in business who has contributed significantly to environmental issues directly affecting Iowa.

• **Environmental Journalism** - For a person working in the news media who has contributed significantly to environmental understanding at a community, county, or state level.

• **Steward of the Land Award** - For a farmer or other individual whose agricultural practices promote soil conservation and/or other environmentally positive results.

• **Public Service Award** - For a legislative or governmental employee or appointee who has contributed significantly to environmental issues directly affecting Iowa.

• **Environmental Educator Award** - For an educator at any level of education who has contributed significantly to an increased understanding of the environment

• **Grassroots Award** - For any individual whose contributions have resulted in significant change regarding the environment in a local community.

### IOWA SIERRAN

Editor: Jane R. Clark Associate Editor: Jo Hudson

The Iowa Sierran is dedicated to informing members and other friends about environmental issues that affect Iowa. It is a forum for the expression of ideas on topics of environmental concern, as well as the voice of the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club. Articles with a by-line represent the research and opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Sierra Club.

We invite submissions of letters, articles, photographs and illustrations. Letters and articles must be complete, accurate and identified with your name, address and phone number(s). **Deadlines are February 5 for the Spring issue; May 5 for the Summer issue; August 5 for the Autumn issue; and November 5 for the Winter issue.** Preference will be given to articles 400-1,000 words in length that relate to Iowa. Longer articles will be considered. The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity, space and libel reasons. Copy should be typed or clearly handwritten, or copy may be submitted in text by e-mail. Other word processing formats may be acceptable--please call before sending. Articles sent by e-mail should be included in the body of the message, not sent as an attachment. If you must attach a file, use a Word document and send to iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org.

Photos submitted must be prints, color or black-and-white. Your name, address and phone number(s), as well as all significant information describing the photo(s) must be included. Photos will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Display advertising may be accepted. Please contact the editor or executive committee (see Directory of this newsletter) before submitting an ad. Ad rates are: \$450 for full page; \$250 for half-page; \$125 for quarter page (11 x 17 page size); or \$16 per column-inch for camera-ready copy. Receive a 10% discount for the same ad with an annual contract (4 times/year); payment in advance is required. Column width is 3.2 inches, gutter (column spacing) is 0.3 inch. Placement of any ad is contingent upon availability of space, and ads must meet Sierra Club guidelines.

Classified ads are five cents per character, including punctuation. Enclose payment with order. Personal checks are acceptable, payable to Sierra Club Iowa Chapter. The editor reserves the right to reject any ad deemed inappropriate. Send classified ad information to: Sierra Club, 3839 Merle Hay Road, Suite 280, Des Moines, Iowa 50310.

A subscription to the Iowa Sierran is included in the cost of Iowa Chapter membership. For non-members, a subscription is \$5 per year.

## From the Director:

The Iowa Chapter received an Environmental Justice grant in 2005 to do outreach to the growing Iowa Latino community. Grant funds were used to purchase Spanish-language brochures that detailed the mercury problem in fish that were distributed to (and available for) sites around the state that serve the Latino/a population.

The Chapter also purchased a banner that read "Justicia Ambiental Ya" (Environmental Justice Now) and includes the Sierra Club logo, T-shirts with the slogan on the back and fishing bobbers that read "Stop Mercury Pollution" in Spanish. The Chapter has also signed-on as a sponsor for the 2006 Latino/a Conference this fall and will exhibit Spanish-language materials at the conference.

Sierra Club, members of the Latino Youth Group from Hoover High School in Des Moines and their facilitators from Employee & Family Resources distributed "Cool Home" and Latino outreach materials at the Drake Relays Parade in April.

"Cool Home" and "Cool Cities" are campaigns the Sierra Club currently is using to provide information and education about global warming. So far, the mayor of Des Moines is the only Iowa mayor to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement--the first step to becoming a Cool City. For more information about Cool Cities, go to <http://www.coolcities.us/>.

As part of the Cool Home campaign, Mr. Green's Cool Home checklist was distributed at an Earth Day Fair in West Des Moines and at an after-school Earth Day activity at Des Moines' Forest Avenue Library. Phyllis Mains borrowed a polar bear costume from the Alaska Coalition and materials about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge



were distributed to participants along with the Cool Home checklist.

Cool Home was launched during Earth Day, check out the website at <http://www.sierraclub.org/coolhome/index.asp>. To see if yours is a "Cool Home," go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/coolhome/mrgreenchecklist.pdf>.

UPDATE: At its May meeting, the Environmental Protection Commission approved the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) proposed Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) and Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR). Sierra Club opposed the rules, particularly the CAMR, because it provided for trading pollution credits. The rules now go before the Administrative Rules Review Committee, a legislative oversight committee, for final approval. The rules are projected to become effective in July.

## THANK YOU IS HARDLY ENOUGH

By Jerry Neff, Chair Eagle View Group

It all began with a friendly phone call. It was during the mid-eighties and the recently formed Eagle View Group was in need of more active members. Mark Henderson was our chairman and asked if I would call the invisible members in our area who had never been active and invite them to our monthly meetings. Sheila Bosworth was one of those members. When I talked with her about what the Club was doing, and invited her to come to a meeting, she asked if it would be okay if they bought their kids, Jamie, who was about 7 and Tyler, about 4. And that was the beginning of Sheila Bosworth's work with Sierra Club.

Sheila and her family started coming to our meetings and it wasn't long before she was elected to the Eagle View executive committee and later became our chair for many years. Despite her family responsibilities, she managed to find time to volunteer at her church and Sunday school and take part in community affairs. One of her more demanding and stressful efforts was serving on the committee to site a new Scott County Landfill. During the 1990s, Sheila became chair of Sierra Club's National Membership Committee and attended meetings in San Francisco

and Washington, DC and later she served on the Club's National Forest Protection and Restoration Committee. Sheila recommended I also apply for that committee and after I was accepted we traveled together to Washington to lobby for national forest protection. In addition to all these Sierra Club responsibilities, Sheila has been our Eagle View Newsletter Editor for as long as I can remember.

And so it was with sadness that at our May EXCOM meeting, Sheila announced her resignation from the EXCOM. She will be starting a new business in Clinton, called "Gifts Galore" and it's time to change gears in her busy life. The newsletter will still be Sheila's responsibility until we find a replacement and she still plans to attend meetings and outings.

I, and the rest of the EXCOM will miss having Sheila's experience, guidance and knowledge of Club rules and practices when we make future decisions about the environment and how to lead our Group. We wish Sheila the best in her new endeavors and hope to see her often at Eagle View events. Thanks Sheila, for all those years of service. From all of us in the Eagle View Group, good luck in your new beginning.

## Donation of Laptops Requested

Thanks to a generous donation by Eagle View Group members, the Iowa Chapter has received a projector and now needs a laptop for use with the projector. We intend to use the donated equipment for educational presentations about environmental issues. We need a laptop with 256 megabytes of memory, with Microsoft Office 2002 (or newer) that includes Power Point software and with the Windows XP operating system.

We would also appreciate a second laptop to use on a day-to-day basis.

If you have a laptop (new or used) that you would like to donate or if you would like to make a monetary donation toward the purchase of a laptop, please contact Neila Seaman at 515-277-8868 or [neila.seaman@sierraclub.org](mailto:neila.seaman@sierraclub.org).

## Soil and Water Conservation Districts

— *your chance to be involved in conservation at the local level.*

It is often said that, “necessity is the mother of invention.” In the case of the soil conservation movement, necessity appeared as a national emergency in the 1930’s. Improper use of farmland and overuse of rangeland teamed up with recurring drought to produce the Dust Bowl era. During that time, dust storms swept across the nation, resulting in ruined land, dead livestock, untold human suffering and forced abandonment of farms by many families. Storms carried the precious topsoil thousands of miles, dumping it into the ocean. It was the dust that brought government to action.

The Iowa soil conservation program was initiated in 1939 when the Iowa General Assembly passed enabling legislation to allow soil conservation districts to organize and to provide for their administration. Legislation of the 48<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was responsible for the Conservation Districts Law. In 1987 legislation was adopted to add “water” to the district title, creating soil and water conservation districts.

Iowa has 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), which are legal subdivisions of state government. Five commissioners, elected in general elections on a non-partisan basis for four-year terms, govern each district. The Commissioners are elected volunteers, and have been working with voluntary, private land conservation in Iowa since as early as 1939.

SWCD Commissioners help guide soil and water conservation programs in the district and watersheds, identify

local issues and concerns, and influence state and national conservation programs. SWCD Commissioners are responsible for carrying out state laws and programs. They also serve as local sponsors for watershed projects, resource conservation and development areas, and soil survey. They work closely with a number of local, state, and federal agencies, particularly the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as local groups and nonprofit organizations interested in improving the quality of Iowa’s environment.

During this election year several Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners (SWCDs) will be elected in the 100 districts throughout Iowa. If you are qualified to vote in a general election, you’re eligible to be a candidate for election to your county’s soil and water conservation district board. Nomination forms, including a petition, are available in the county Auditor’s office. **Candidates may begin circulating nomination petitions August 7. At least 25 eligible voters must sign the petition. Remember to file it with the Auditor’s office by the August 30, 2006 deadline in order to be on the ballot in November.** Only one person per township within a district can be represented on the district board.

The natural resource issues may not be the same as they were when the soil conservation movement began, but the work is far from complete. Water quality, non-point source pollution and wildlife issues are a bigger concern than has been in the past. And with the new Farm Bill being developed, opportunities to improve our environment will expand. This is a great opportunity to become involved in environmental work at the local level. Iowa’s SWCD

are a largely unrecognized but very effective tool utilized to improve soil and water quality. Your involvement will include establishing conservation priorities, resolving soil loss complaints, approving soil conservation plans and assisting in the management of district funds and personnel. A SWCD Commissioner is a volunteer conservation promoter who helps direct activities such as filed days, educational meetings, and materials, contests, awards, programs, and publicity.

Conservation Districts of Iowa—CDI was founded in 1947 to provide a unified voice for the individual county-based SWCD. CDI is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization devoted to provide leadership and education through local districts to promote conservation of Iowa’s natural resources. Since its inception, CDI has been working with SWCD Commissioners in Iowa to promote sustainable agricultural practices for the protection of soil and water resources. While each SWCD maintains its own programs, CDI helps the districts combine efforts to address regional, state, and national issues. If you are interested in becoming a commissioner, or wish to participate in conservation of your natural resources locally, contact your local SWCD. Information regarding your local SWCD is available on the CDI website; please visit [www.cdiowa.org](http://www.cdiowa.org).

For more information:

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### Natural reproduction of trout observed in 29 streams

## Farming Practices, Habitat Restoration Improve Iowa's Trout Streams

DECORAH — Northeast Iowa is known for its scenic trout streams. But a few years ago, Iowa’s trout streams were so muddy that only six streams supported a naturally reproducing trout population. Today, projects have improved water quality, and both trout and local communities are reaping the benefits.

The improvement came from projects on the land and in the streams. Trout depend on clear, clean and cold water to survive. However, sediment from farm fields and eroded streambanks was clouding the water and preventing trout from successfully spawning. That sediment, as well as nutrients and fertilizers, washed in from the watershed, or the area of land that drains into a stream.

To clean up the streams, the DNR has funded a number of watershed projects. Project coordinators work one-on-one with landowners to install conservation practices. These practices are ways of managing the land to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients and bacteria reaching streams.

“We were losing a lot of soil into the streams. Too much mud makes spawning impossible,” said Bill Kalishek, a DNR fisheries biologist at the Decorah hatchery. “But now we’re changing the way water comes into the stream, and the trout are benefiting.”

Financial assistance from the projects’ funding helps landowners plant grass buffers and build structures like ponds and terraces. Other practices change how manure and fertilizer chemicals are managed, while the Conservation Reserve Program gives rental payments for taking erodible land out of production.

In addition, the DNR has also done in-stream habitat work. This work includes protecting streambanks and installing bank hides, which are wooden boxes placed underwater to provide trout overhead cover habitat and protection from predators.

“Our success in improving trout streams takes a lot of work to accomplish, but it’s a simple concept,” said Ubbo Agena, coordinator of the DNR’s nonpoint source pollution program. “Trout depend on clean water to survive, and water quality depends on how land in the watershed is managed. So, to keep trout thriving, watershed work needs to continue.”

Today, 29 trout streams boast naturally reproducing trout populations. One of those, Spring Falls, is part of the Elk Creek Watershed Project in Delaware County. That project reduced the amount of sediment reaching streams by 13,000

tons per year. That’s equal to about 1,444 dump truck loads of soil every year.

The improvements are evident in the trout. The brown trout population in Spring Falls, a tributary of Elk Creek, depended entirely on stocking in 1991. Now, there is a self-sustaining population that offers more than 1,000 trout per mile of stream.

Elk Creek is just one success story, one that benefits local businesses. As fishing improves, so does business for local shops, gas stations, hotels and restaurants. According to a 2001 DNR trout angler survey, licensed trout anglers made an estimated 372,338 trips to trout fisheries in Iowa. At approximately \$25 per day – that includes food, lodging, transportation and equipment – more than \$9.3 million is spent annually on trout fishing in Iowa.

“We do cater to the trout fisherman, and in northeast Iowa a big chunk of sales come from that. When they come, they come to buy,” said Dave Nading, owner of Nading’s Service and Sporting in Strawberry Point.

To keep Iowa’s trout streams a success, work in the watershed needs to continue. Current conservation practices need to be maintained, and new watersheds and miles of stream need projects.

“The landowners can be proud of what they’ve done,” said Bryan Hayes, DNR fisheries biologist at the Manchester trout hatchery. “But even when projects end, we need to build on what we started and maintain what we’ve put in place.”

Local watershed projects are sponsored by county Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Many of these projects are funded by the DNR. This funding is made possible through the Section 319 program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which provides DNR funding for non-point pollution programs. The DNR generally funds local watershed projects in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- More information on Iowa’s watersheds is available at [www.iowadnr.com/water/watershed/](http://www.iowadnr.com/water/watershed/)
- For more information on trout fishing, visit [www.iowadnr.com/fish/](http://www.iowadnr.com/fish/)
- A detailed brochure on trout stream improvements is available at [www.iowadnr.com/water/non-point/brochure.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/water/non-point/brochure.html) or by contacting Jess Brown at (515) 281-5131.

**CONTACTS: Ubbo Agena at (515) 281-6402 or Bill Kalishek at (563) 382-8324**

### PROPOSED 750-MW COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT IN WATERLOO

By Lynn A. Brant

Last December (2005) LS Power Company announced that they intend to build a 750-MW pulverized coal-fired electrical generating plant on the northeast edge of Waterloo, Iowa. This plant would be a “merchant” plant, in that it will serve whoever the Company can sell power to – not to a service area for which they are responsible. Most or all of the power would be sold out of state. However, the Company apparently does not yet have the contracts it needs.

Iowa does not have a state requirement for environmental impact statements and the permitting process is somewhat fragmented. The Iowa Utilities Board and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources must each grant a permit, but the two agencies are not well coordinated. There is also concern that public need, socio-economic impacts, and other implications of the plant may not be adequately addressed. The initial announcement of the plant promoted it as a pure and wonderful thing in the economic development of the metro area.

Waterloo, especially its east side, is economically depressed and in need of good jobs and economic development of the correct kind. It is believed by many that if the coal-fired power plant had been proposed for another part of the city or in adjacent Cedar Falls, it would have met with much more initial objection. It did seem that the city leaders and the newspaper were behind the proposal when it was first announced.

However, a grass-roots campaign against the proposed plant started to gather momentum as early as January of this year. Some 3,000 signatures have appeared on petitions, 1,000 yard signs are being distributed, and many letters have appeared in the newspaper objecting to the plant. On 11 May, the Iowa Utilities Board held a meeting required before the Company can file a petition (application) with IUB. About 500 citizens were present, and it appeared that most were opposed to the plant. And there is reason to believe that some elected leaders who were originally in favor of the plant are beginning to have second thoughts. One local TV news anchor said the plant was a “done deal” but he has had to retract that comment. There are many who do not think this plant is a “done deal” and are working toward reversing LS Power Company’s plans.

Please check the website for more information: [www.cleanair-waterloo.blogspot.com](http://www.cleanair-waterloo.blogspot.com) or email [cleanairwaterloo@gmail.com](mailto:cleanairwaterloo@gmail.com)

## Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers

# Aquatic Invasive Species in Iowa

They come on boats. They are stowaways in cargo. And sometimes they are smuggled in by people. They are aquatic invasive species (AIS).

AIS do not occur naturally in Iowa's lakes, rivers, and wetlands. Most are native to regions outside of North America and were originally introduced by humans. Some introductions, such as that of purple loosestrife and common carp, are intentional and do unexpected damage. Many more introductions are unintentional.

Most of the AIS in Iowa, such as zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, and Asian carp, have arrived since 1990 and spread unobtrusively from lake to lake. But one AIS that gets noticed is the one that jumps out of the water and hits you in the head.

These flying fish, silver carp, have brought attention to the growing problem of AIS. Silver carp can weigh up to 60 pounds and have the ability to jump several feet out of the water. Imagine what it's like to drive your boat along your favorite river and suddenly get smacked by a flying fish that splatters upon impact.

Silver and bighead carp were introduced to the U.S. in the early

1970's by aquaculturists in Arkansas. They escaped from ponds and have expanded into much of the Mississippi River Basin. Silver carp have been documented in the Mississippi, Missouri, and Des Moines Rivers in Iowa. Bighead carp have a wider distribution and have been found in the Mississippi, Missouri, Chariton, Des Moines, Skunk, Iowa, Cedar, Platte, Nodaway, and Big Sioux Rivers in Iowa. Both species are large, deep-bodied fish reaching a maximum size of about 3 feet and 60 pounds. The sides of silver carp are uniformly silver in color, and the belly is white to silvery-white. Bighead carp have heads and fins that are slate gray and silver sides blotched with black that fade to a white or yellowish belly. Both species have very small scales. Silver and bighead carp are plankton feeders and may have significant impacts on food availability for larval fish, adult filter-feeding fish, and native mussels.

Silver and bighead carp are only two of many AIS. Iowa is also under attack from Eurasian watermilfoil, purple loosestrife, and zebra mussels.

Eurasian watermilfoil is an aquatic plant native to Europe and Asia. It was introduced into North America in the 1940's and has spread to at least 45 states and 3 Canadian provinces. It has been identified in 28 waterbodies in Iowa, including the Mississippi River, since 1993. The long stems have feather-like leaves arranged in whorls of four around the stem. Each leaf is finely divided into 9 to 21 pairs of leaflets. Stems usually branch several times as they reach the water surface, forming a dense floating mat. Eurasian watermilfoil competes aggressively with native aquatic plants, thereby reducing diversity. Dense surface mats interfere with boating, fishing, and swimming, can lower lakefront property values, and provide poor spawning areas.

European settlers introduced purple loosestrife to North America in the 1800's as an ornamental plant. Because of its popularity, intentional introduction continued, and it is now found in every state in the U.S. Infestations occur throughout Iowa. Purple loosestrife is a dense perennial most easily identified by its magenta flowers. Flowers are five to six-petaled and are in long terminal spikes. The long, narrow leaves are generally opposite along the stem. Stems are stiff, four to six-sided, and up to 7 feet tall. Dense, monotypic stands replace native wetland plant species and the wildlife that depend on them.

Zebra mussels are small mussels native to the Caspian Sea region of Asia that were introduced into the Great Lakes in 1986 in ballast water. They quickly spread throughout the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, and other inland waterbodies in the U.S. They have infested the Iowa portion

of the Mississippi River since 1992. Zebra mussels have D-shaped shells up to 2 inches long with alternating dark and light stripes. They grow in clusters containing numerous individuals attached to solid objects. Zebra mussels compete with other organisms for food, kill native clams by colonizing on their shells, clog power plant and public water intakes pipes, and cover beaches with dead shells. Zebra mussel densities are so thick in places on the Mississippi River that dead shells form a layer 6 feet deep, and at times, few native mussels can be found without zebra mussels attached to them.

No interior lakes, rivers, or streams in Iowa are known to have populations of zebra mussels; however, two zebra mussels were found in Clear Lake in August 2005. Further investigation of the area revealed no additional mussels. This sighting of zebra mussels is cause for concern, but it is too early to tell if there is a reproducing population in the lake. Whether or not additional zebra mussels are found, their identification over 100 miles from the nearest known infestation highlights the spread of AIS.

Many AIS spread between waterbodies by hitchhiking on boats and trailers, in bait buckets, and on aquatic plants. Once AIS infest a waterbody, they can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to control and may be impossible to eradicate. The best control for AIS is preventing their introduction into new waterbodies. In Iowa, it is illegal to possess, introduce, purchase, sell or transport AIS. By taking the following precautions, each person can make a critical difference in preventing the spread of AIS.

**Inspect** your boat, trailer, and equipment and **remove** visible aquatic plants, animals, and mud before leaving a water access.

**Drain** water from your boat, motor, bilge, livewell, and bait container before leaving a water access.

**Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash.

**Spray, rinse, or dry** boats and recreational equipment to remove or kill species that were not visible when leaving a waterbody.

**Never release** animals or plants into the wild unless they originally came from that waterbody.

**Learn** to identify AIS. Report any sightings of AIS or questionable species to your local conservation agency representative for identification.

**Volunteer** to help monitor AIS or conduct watercraft inspections at local waterbodies.

Past news about Eurasian watermilfoil or zebra mussels may not have gotten the attention it deserved unless it was about a popular lake, but AIS continue to threaten our water resources. Maybe to get people's attention you have to hit them with a big carp.

For more information, contact Kim Bogenschutz, Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Coordinator, at 515-432-2823.



## Corps Sued to Force Release of Wetlands Protection Records

### *Downward Data Trend Showed Mounting Wetland Losses*

Washington, DC —The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is refusing to release records documenting a continuing decline in America's shrinking base of natural wetlands, according to a lawsuit filed April 11 by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). The Corps is the principal agency overseeing development of what are supposed to be federally protected bogs, marshes, swamps, estuaries and lowlands but the suit filed contends that the Corps stopped responding to PEER requests for permit and enforcement records under the Freedom of Information Act several months ago.

"How can the Corps insist that it is doing a good job of protecting wetlands when they will not reveal just what they are doing?" asked PEER General Counsel Richard Condit who filed the suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. "The paper trail on the Corps ended in 2002 and that trail pointed straight downhill."

PEER has maintained a 20-year database of agency records detailing Corps permit and enforcement performance, covering the period from 1982 through 2002. Those numbers showed—

- The number of wetlands restored under Corps auspices has declined by more than half since 1992;
- The Corps permit denial rate is now miniscule. Enforcement actions, inspections and site visits are also at their lowest levels; and
- The Corps has doubled its reliance on Nationwide and Regional Permits (forms of relaxed regulatory review based on categorical exclusions). Meanwhile, individual permits that require in depth environmental evaluations have declined every year.

Last year, the Corps stopped providing updates of their quarterly reports for the years 2003 and 2004. New PEER Freedom of Information Act requests for 2005 data went out earlier this year and have yet to be answered but these requests are not yet ripe for litigation.

The main tool used by the Corps to approve the destruction of a naturally functioning wetland is called mitigation, the promise by a developer to lessen or compensate for the damage by creating or preserving wetlands on site or elsewhere. Relying on mitigation allows President Bush to proclaim that his administration is meeting a "no net wetland loss" goal for the Corps regulatory program. Analysis of Corps records, however, shows little follow-up to ensure that the mitigation promises are kept.

"The Corps wetlands mitigation program is a national joke since developers know that the Corps will either fail to make a compliance inspection, or, in the best of circumstances, require some minor permit modification that legalizes the violation," added Condit, noting that the Clean Water Act set a goal to achieve zero discharge into wetlands by 1985, a benchmark that has long since passed unfulfilled. "Confronting an agency ethic that all development must be approved, the Corps' own specialists are among the most deeply frustrated by their inability to enforce the law."

*This press release was published with permission of PEER. PEER is a service organization assisting federal & state public employees. Through PEER, public servants can work as "anonymous activists" so that public agencies must confront the message, rather than the messenger. [www.peer.org](http://www.peer.org) Contact: Chas Offutt (202) 265-7337*

## UPDATE OF MAJOR WATER SOURCES MAY AFFECT ANIMAL CONFINEMENT SITING

Animal producers planning to build, modify or expand their confinement operations should check for recent revisions in the list of major water sources.

New and expanding facilities must be built at least 1,000 feet from all major water sources. This separation distance is not new and it applies to proposed facilities of all sizes, even those with less than 500 animal units.

"What is new for producers is the list of these major water sources was recently updated to correct some technical errors and increase consistency across the state," said Gene Tinker, coordinator of animal feeding operations for the DNR.

Tinker added that facilities that submitted a construction permit application or manure management plan (MMP) to the DNR prior to April 5 can use the list of major water sources that was in effect on the date of their submittal. For proposed facilities that do not need a construction permit or MMP, the date that applies is when construction began.

The new list applies to all proposed confinement buildings submitting MMPs or construction permit applications after April 5. It also applies to proposed smaller confinement

facilities.

The list of major water sources can be found in Tables 1 and 2 of Chapter 65 of the Iowa Administrative Code. Or, producers can find Tables 1 and 2 on the DNR Web site at <http://www.iowadnr.com/af/newrules.html>.

The major water sources are also shown on the DNR's AFO Siting Atlas, part of the Interactive Mapping Web site. Check <http://csbweb.igsb.uiowa.edu/imsgate/introduction/home.asp> for maps that show major water sources, karst terrain and alluvial soils. "I'd like to remind all producers who are thinking about expansion or new construction to consider the separation distances that apply," said Tinker. "Not only are there separation distances from buildings, but there are separation distances required from environmentally sensitive areas such as water sources, public and private wells, ag drainage wells and public thoroughfares."

More information can be found on the DNR Web site at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com).

For more information, contact Gene Tinker at (515) 281-3103.

## House Passes Series of Amendments to Protect Clean Water, Coasts and Forests

Statement of Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director  
on Interior Appropriations Bill  
May 18, 2006

Sierra Club today applauds Congress for putting America back on the right track with key votes on conservation measures. It was a banner day for bipartisan protection of America's special places and safe and healthy communities.

By a vote of 217-203, the House approved an amendment to maintain the offshore drilling moratorium, which had been stripped last week in committee. The House also passed 237-181 an amendment to restrict subsidies for clearcut logging in the Tongass National Forest, and voted 222-198 to prohibit the EPA from implementing a 2003 policy directive that eliminates Clean Water Act protections for many small streams, wetlands, ponds and other waters around the country.

### Maintaining the Moratorium that Protects our Coasts from New Drilling

We are elated that the House has once again reaffirmed its commitment to protecting America's coasts and the economies, recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat they support by passing the Puttnam-Capps-Jim Davis-Foley-Bill Young-Pallone amendment to maintain the moratorium. Bipartisan support for the offshore drilling moratorium remains strong, even as the rhetoric in Washington over energy rises. In the midst of planning summer trips to the beach, Americans deserve energy policies that save families money and protect their favorite vacation spots. Drilling off our coasts won't do either.

Although we are celebrating today's victory, we must remain vigilant on behalf of our beaches and coastal waters. The oil and gas industry and their allies in Congress will not take 'no' for an answer. They have coveted America's coasts for decades, and we fully expect them to pull out all the stops in the coming weeks. House Resources Committee Chairman Pombo (R-CA) and Senate Energy Committee Chairman Domenici (R-NM) are already gearing up to push bills that would open up the coasts to destructive oil and gas drilling. We can look under every rock and every grain of sand in the U.S. and still not be able to drill our way to lower energy prices. Offshore oil and gas drilling is the slowest, dirtiest and most expensive way to produce energy. Opening our coasts to destructive drilling would do little to lower prices or make us more energy independent, but it would threaten our beaches with pollution and potential oil spills and destroy billion-dollar tourism and fishing industries. There are faster, cheaper, cleaner and longer-term energy solutions like making our homes, offices, cars and trucks more efficient and clean, renewable energy that will start saving families and businesses money today and protect our coastal waters, beaches and economies.

### Clean Water Amendment

We applaud Congress for passing the Oberstar-Leach-Dingell amendment - reflecting the bipartisan position taken by 218 members of the House in 2003 - that prevents the EPA from using appropriated funds to implement a policy directive that denies longstanding Clean Water Act anti-pollution safeguards for streams, wetlands, ponds and other waters around the country. For more than three decades, the

Clean Water Act has protected all of the nation's waters from unregulated pollution, filling and destruction. However, under EPA's current policy, thousands of waters already have been excluded from these safeguards, and thousands of miles of streams and millions of acres of wetlands are at risk of losing protection if this policy continues. Rather than squander the progress we have made cleaning up our waters, today's vote ensures that that Americans have safe water to drink and clean places to swim and fish.

### Tongass Subsidy Amendment

In a victory for taxpayers and wild forests, Congress passed the Chabot-Andrews amendment to stop taxpayer subsidies for the construction of new logging roads on the Tongass National Forest. Taxpayer-subsidized logging in the Tongass has cost millions. In 2005, the U. S. Forest Service spent nearly \$49 million of taxpayer money on the logging program and logging roads in the Tongass National Forest. Yet private timber companies paid the federal government only \$500,000 in return for the privilege to cut down hundreds of acres of old-growth rainforest. This resulted in a \$48 million loss to America's taxpayer. In 2004, the Chabot/Andrews amendment won on the floor of the House by a vote of 222-205, but was not included in the final bill. America's taxpayers deserve better, and so does America's Rainforest. This was an important victory, for reasons both fiscal and environmental.

Despite the victories on these key amendments, we are disappointed that important conservation programs remain grossly underfunded in this Interior Appropriations bill.

Contact: Annie Strickler, (202) 487-4493 (cell)

## New Wetlands Report Misleads Public—Including Ponds with Wetlands in Bush Administration Report Fails to tell the Real Story

March 30, 2006

A new Bush administration report on wetland trends misleads the public by counting ponds as wetlands when attempting to demonstrate a net gain for wetlands across the country. President Bush has committed to a net gain of wetlands, but so far the administration has failed stop the loss of these vital areas that provide clean water and homes for countless wildlife.

"This would be great news if the nation were really gaining wetlands, but unfortunately, this report provides more evidence of Bush administration spin than a net increase in wetlands," said Ed Hopkins, Director of Sierra Club's Environmental Quality Program. "An open pond is not a wetland."

The new report, the National Wetlands Inventory's "Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Conterminous United States, 1998-2004" was released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) March 30. It reports on the acreage of wetlands across the country based on a combination of aerial surveys and some on-the-ground field checking. However, the report fails to distinguish between actual wetlands and ponds used for treating wastewater, stormwater and other effluent and as amenities for subdivisions. There is a nationwide trend towards the construction of ponds, sometimes out of wetlands, to use as treatment systems and as suburban amenities. These waterbodies may be considered deepwater, aquatic resources, but they should hardly be considered the naturally existing wetlands that, in many instances, they have replaced.

"Anyone can see the difference between a natural wetland and a man-made pond," said Hopkins.

At the recent Annual Meeting of the Association of State Wetland Managers, a USFWS representative acknowledged a nationwide proliferation of pond conversions, represent-

ing roughly 700,000 acres. If these ponds were removed from the figures presented in this report, the supposed "net gain in wetlands" would be eliminated. As demonstrated in photographs accompanying the agency's analysis, the USFWS's field checking of open water resources found many of them not to be wetlands, but rather, man-made ponds used as treatment systems and for various purposes. Nonetheless, the USFWS has made no adjustment in the figures to account for the over-estimation of wetlands.

"If the Bush administration is really concerned about the nation's remaining wetlands, it will enforce the Clean Water Act and abandon the destructive policy it issued in January, 2003, which denies Clean Water Act protections for many wetlands, streams and other waters," said Hopkins.

America's wetlands provide something for everyone. Wetlands protect us all in many ways -- they filter pollutants from our drinking water, protect our homes by storing floodwater, and provide homes for fish, shellfish, and wildlife. Wetlands are crucial for clean water, serving as a natural filter absorbing water-borne pollutants and damaging contaminants before the water enters our rivers, lakes, and streams.

The link to the USFWS announcement and Sierra Club's response:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.10.B?contentidonly=true&contentid=2006/03/0111.xml>

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## USDA-Department of Interior Report on Nation's Wetlands

The next time you head for a golf course be sure to grab your hip waders. On March 30, USDA and the Department of Interior released a report entitled *U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Conterminous United States 1998-2004*. The report concluded that for the first time since 1954 when the USFWS began keeping data there was a net gain in wetlands. The report found a total of 107.7 million total wetlands, with an overall gain of 191,800 acres of wetlands during the six year period and an overall net gain of 32,000. Almost all the net gain was in freshwater wetlands. The 116 page report can be viewed at [http://wetlandsfws.er.usgs.gov/status\\_trends/national\\_reports/trends\\_2005\\_report.pdf](http://wetlandsfws.er.usgs.gov/status_trends/national_reports/trends_2005_report.pdf). A Fact Sheet and additional information are available at [http://wetlandsfws.er.usgs.gov/status\\_trends/](http://wetlandsfws.er.usgs.gov/status_trends/).

But, as pointed out by Julie Sibbing, senior program manager for agricultural and wetland policy for the National Wildlife Federation, if man-made ponds, including golf course water hazards, are removed from the report and if the loss of smaller wetlands and coastal wetlands are included in the calculations, the national wetland status becomes a net loss of 84,000 acres annually. Over 500,000 acres of ecologically complex swamp and tidal marches were lost since 1998 and much of the wetland gain was in deeper water, less complex ponds such as those in housing developments, mine reclamation ponds, and ponds that result from the digging of fill material for highways and other projects. The report, which covers the period from 1998 to 2004, does not include the 64,000 acres coastal wetlands destroyed by last summer by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

On March 28, the EPA issued a proposed wetland mitigation rule that would make it easier for developers to mitigate wetland losses through wetland banks or paying for wetland creation - options that are rarely as ecologically valuable as the preservation of existing wetlands. Federal agency oversight of these mitigation efforts has not been rigorous and some efforts to create new wetlands end in failure.

The USDA-Department of Interior report was followed by release of a report by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that predicts that federal agencies will meet a goal to restore, create or improve 3 million acres of wetlands by Earth Day 2009. The report, entitled *Conserving America's Wetlands 2006: Two Years of Progress Implementing the President's Goal*, highlights the Wetlands Reserve Program. The President's budget request for FY2007 included the enrollment of 250,000 acres under this program. The report is posted on the web at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/wetlands\\_200604.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/wetlands_200604.pdf).

Excerpted from the March-April 2006 issue of the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's "Making Hay" newsletter, and is used with permission.

## Create an Environmental Legacy

Bequests have played a key role in the Sierra Club's environmental successes over the years.

Planning now may make your gift more meaningful and reduce taxes on your estate. We have many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance contact:

Sierra Club Planned Giving Program • 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 977-5639 • email: [planned.giving@sierraclub.org](mailto:planned.giving@sierraclub.org)

Based on Controversial Science, Bill Would Increase Future Fire Risk

## House Passes Destructive Salvage Logging Bill

May 17, 2006

Contact: Annie Strickler, (415) 977-5619

Washington, D.C. -- Ignoring concerns about increased fire risk and more taxpayer-subsidized commercial logging, the House today passed, by a 243 to 182 vote, a far-reaching Salvage Logging bill. The ill-named Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act, a bill which disregards important protections for clean drinking water and wildlife, promotes subsidized logging road construction in wild roadless forests and eliminates meaningful environmental analysis and public involvement required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

"As the fire season gets underway, it is shameful that Congress is once again diverting critical funds from real fire protection measures in order to fast track more destructive logging," said Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director. "This bill has nothing to do with forest recovery or research, and everything to do with logging and subsidizing the timber industry."

The bill creates more perverse incentives for harmful logging, and diverts funding from fire suppression, preparedness, hazardous fuels reduction and community fire planning. It is also likely that more funds will even be diverted from needed replanting and restoration work to

pay for salvage logging.

"This bill in effect says that compromising citizen and firefighter safety in order to cut down more trees is a fair trade," said Pope.

Salvage logging after fires or other disturbances can increase the severity of future fires because of the increase in fuel loads from logging slash and the alteration of the character and condition of other vegetation. In recent weeks the group Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE)—a non-profit organization of current, former, and retired wildland firefighters to promote firefighter and community safety—came out in opposition to the bill. They know that this bill would make forests more flammable and increase the safety risks for wildland firefighters. The bill is also opposed by taxpayer advocates because of the great increase in waste, fraud and abuse associated with the federal timber program.

The bill has been at the heart of a scandal over efforts to censor the science showing that post-fire logging can increase fire risk and hamper the ability of forests to recover from natural disturbances. A handful of faculty at Oregon State University sought to derail publication of a contradictory ground breaking scientific report by some of their colleagues. The study, based on two years of on-the-ground research from the aftermath of logging in the

Biscuit fire area in Southwest Oregon, appeared in Science magazine in January and was critical of post-fire logging due to increased fire risk and the destruction of young trees growing back on their own. An inquiry by the Oregon state legislature revealed that some of the same OSU faculty and staff that had been involved in the censorship efforts also collaborated closely with Republican congressional staff and timber industry lobby groups to do 'damage control' so that the Science article would not derail the progress of the Walden bill.

"Congress didn't just ignore the implications for wildlife and forest health when passing this salvage logging bill," said Pope. "They also shoved aside legitimate concerns about firefighter and community safety while making room for politicized science."

You can also find background info on the website at [www.sierraclub.org/forests](http://www.sierraclub.org/forests)

*Editor's note: There is a similar bill introduced in the Senate by Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), although there has not been any committee action on it. The Energy and Natural Resources committee could bring it up in the next two months but the overall legislative calendar is pretty busy. It wouldn't hurt to let Senators Harkin and Grassley know that Sierra Club opposes the salvage logging bill.*

## America's Crown Jewels at Risk

By John Byrne, (Virginia),  
Chair, Sierra Club's National Parks  
and Monuments Committee

Yosemite! Grand Canyon! Yellowstone! Denali! Everglades! What do these names have in common? They are all national parks whose names are known by everyone, the true crown jewels of America.

And being national parks, they are all well protected, right?

Wrong! The present Administration, attuned to maximizing commercial profits and minimizing the public values of our public lands, has other plans for *your* national parks.

The Interior Department proposal to rewrite the management policies for our parks would topple "conservation of resources unimpaired for the future" as the mission of our national parks. Under proposed new management policies, the Park Service could:

- Allow increased motorized use in spite of air pollution, noise, and damage to the land.
- Let commercial outfitters keep caches and other developments in Wilderness.
- Consider increased uses of park resources just as important as "preservation" of these resources.

Sierra Club and other concerned activists commented extensively on the proposed damaging changes. Most comments can be summarized as follows:

- "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." and
- "Our parks need more protection for the future, not less."

If the Administration listens to the public's concerns, they will withdraw the proposed changes. However, we're not counting on that! Although the first round of comments is over, the Administration, overwhelmed by the outpouring of public opinion, is considering reopening the comment period. Now is the perfect time to publicize our outrage over this attempt to shift our national parks' mission from preservation to development and commercialization.

Even though Iowa unfortunately has no national parks, Iowans do share in the national pride and interest in our wonderful National Park System.

Please send a Letter to the Editor of your paper, and send a copy of it to your members of Congress. Here's sample language for a Letter to Editor, to put into your own words.

(Start with some personal info and reason why you care about the parks or about one particular park that you like to visit.)

America's National Parks provide some of the finest outdoor recreation opportunities, scenic wonders, and wildlife habitat. Millions of Americans and visitors from around the world flock to our parks each year. But the National Park Service's (NPS) proposed rewrite of the park's Management Policies would fundamentally shift how our nation's national parks are managed from resource conservation toward commercialization.

The proposed policies fail to meet the current level of protection afforded our National Parks and eliminate reference to the mission to conserve parks unimpaired for future generations. The draft Policies would limit the agency's ability to protect air quality and soundscapes, and control inappropriate motorized use in national parks. In short, the proposed NPS Management Policies are fundamentally flawed and cannot be fixed.

National Parks are special places and should be preserved for future generations. The public doesn't want more commercialization, more off-road vehicles, and other threats

to our crown jewels, America's great natural treasures. NPS should abandon its proposed changes and keep its current strong preservation policies.

Thank you for writing! Sierra Club's brand new National Parks and Monuments Committee is working to raise public consciousness about major threats to our National Parks and Monuments. Let the Committee know you care! Join our network of parks activists. Just send an email to committee staff liaison Vicky Hoover ([vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org](mailto:vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org))

## A LONGING FOR WILDERNESS OR WILDNESS

By Bruce Ehresman

I am glad to say that there is an important discussion happening in Iowa concerning WILDNESS. There is a growing concept called the Ioway Connectivity Project that celebrates wildness and is exploring the possibilities of re-connecting animal populations to other animal populations, re-connecting humans to nature, creating corridors for bridging gaps - gaps between people and the land, the natural. Please keep your eyes and ears open for information, events, and happenings about wildness and the Ioway Connectivity Project.

Here are some words to consider written by a champion for wild places, Sigurd Olson, from a chapter he called "A Longing for Wilderness."

"We enjoy comforts never known before, but they are not enough; somehow, somehow, we must make contact with naturalness, the source of all life. The frontiers are still too close to forget and the memory of wilderness goes far back into the eons when humans lived close to the earth and were in tune with the ancient rhythms. We still listen to the song

of the wilderness and long for a land we have lost. Civilization has not changed emotional needs, which were ours long before it arose. This is the reason for the hunger, this is the true meaning of wilderness and the search of moderns for places where they can know it again. The battle to save the last remnants is not only a struggle for freedom and beauty, but for the spirit of humans in a world that seems to have lost its balance and perspective."

The author Wallace Stegner warned some years ago, "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed, if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of a wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence.... The reassurance that wilderness is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in 10 years set foot in it."

The Ioway Project for Connectivity, A Wild Ioway Discovery Event, is sponsored by Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's Agrestal Fund

## DON'T MISS OUT!

If you're not on the Iowa Topics listserv you're missing out on information about everything from genetically modified organisms to energy policy to wetlands information and more. The listserv is a combination of legislative information, meetings and outings announcements, take-action alerts and general discussion. It is open to any subscriber. Any message relating to the environment or the Iowa Chapter itself is welcome to be posted on the list.

To subscribe, address an e-mail to [LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG](mailto:LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG). In the message body, type the following one line command (use your first and last name instead of the example given):

SUBSCRIBE IOWA-TOPICS Your first name Your last name. No subject is necessary.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(See inserts for calendars of events for Central Iowa Group, Leopold Group and Iowa City Area Group.)

### Eagle View Group (Quad-Cities Area)

#### June 4: Canoe Loud Thunder/ Lake George, Illinois City, IL

Canoe Advanced-Beginner

What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon, than a graceful canoe paddle across a lake? Come and explore the beauty and uniqueness of this forest preserve and lake. We will meet at the Lake George Concession Stand and Boat Rental at 2 p.m. Boat rental is based on an hourly fee that increases in price each year and is unavailable at this time. All floatation devices, paddles, and boats are available to rent. Or bring your own gear and paddle for free. Personal Flotation Devices are required on the lake. For more information please contact Holly J. Johnson, [hollajean@yahoo.com](mailto:hollajean@yahoo.com) or cell 309-912-8110, home 309-757-9045.

#### July 10: Full Moon Mystery Hike, Quad Cities, IL Hike-Beginner

Come explore the critters of the night. View nature as it rests or does it? Owls, moths, bats, mice, rats, raccoons, and other creatures that go bump in the night, along with the rising moon, will be our guides on this hike. Secret location: Hennepin Canal Parkway in Milan, Illinois. We will explore the Last Lock of the Parkway, showing how the new Casino will impact ALL of the residents of Big Island. We will meet at 8 p.m. at the Parkway entrance. Please bring water, bug spray, flashlight, boots. For further information contact Holly J. Johnson at [hollajean@yahoo.com](mailto:hollajean@yahoo.com) or cell 30-912-8110, home 309-757-9045.

#### Aug 6: Pick and Paddle the Wapsi, Princeton, IA

Canoe Advanced-Beginner

Paddling the Wapsi on a Sunday afternoon! Join us for a day of paddling and picking up trash along the Wapsi River. This section of the Wapsi, approximately 6-8 miles, leads to the Mississippi River. It is a beautiful section but needs our helping hands to remove trash. Along the way, you will see the impact of ATV riders mixed with the beauty of the river. After the paddle, a potluck meal will await us. Please bring: canoe or kayak if you have one, paddles, Personal Flotation Device, sun screen, watershoes, work or latex gloves, drinking water, plastic bag for trash and a potluck dish to pass. Please contact Holly for directions and information at [hollajean@yahoo.com](mailto:hollajean@yahoo.com) or cell 30-912-8110, home 309-757-9045.

#### Looking Ahead

#### Sep 24-Oct 1 Wild Things of Minnesota in Panoramic Color, Duluth, MN

Nature Walk-Beginner - \$1125

A national outing led by Illinois leaders!

We will have eight days to enjoy a veritable feast spread before us on nature's table. A bounty of broad vistas, rugged cliffs, dense pine and hardwood forests, serene lakes and thundering waterfalls all spiced with glimpses of wildlife and brilliant fall foliage. Canoe the Boundary Waters, visit both the International Wolf Center and the Hawk Ridge Nature Center, plus hike and work in Tettagouchie State Park on Lake Superior. Luxury cabin and camping facilities. See brochure and register at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/brochure/06210A.asp>  
Register today. Space limited.

## Global Warming: An Inconvenient Truth In theaters this summer

The highly anticipated film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, opened in May in theaters nationwide. The film, wildly successful at this year's Sundance Film Festival, offers viewers a look at Al Gore's fervent crusade to halt global warming in its tracks by exposing the myths and misconceptions that surround it. *An Inconvenient Truth* paints an engaging portrait of Gore's "traveling global warming show" and brings home the message that fighting global warming is the biggest moral challenge facing our civilization.

Central Iowa showings of this film include the Fleur Cinema in Des Moines beginning June 23 and the Varsity Theater in Ames beginning June 30. Check the website [www.climatecrisis.net](http://www.climatecrisis.net) for additional showings.

#### Ten Things To Do

Want to do something to help stop global warming? Here are 10 simple things you can do and how much carbon dioxide you'll save doing them.

- **Change a light.** Replacing one regular light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb will save 150 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
- **Drive less.** Walk, bike, carpool or take mass transit more often. You'll save one pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don't drive!
- **Recycle more.** You can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide per year by recycling just half of your household waste.

### ALSO OF INTEREST

The following events are not sponsored by the Sierra Club but are listed because they might be of interest to members. The conduct of these events is the sole responsibility of the other organizations sponsoring them.

### IOWATER

#### – Making Waves of Difference Across Iowa – JOIN US!

IOWATER is a statewide volunteer water quality monitoring program coordinated through the Iowa DNR. All workshops are open to any individual or group that is interested in water quality. Upon completion of the workshop, you will be a certified Level 1 IOWATER Citizen Monitor. The workshop is based on ten hours training, set up comfortably over two days, exact times varying depending on location. Workshop registration fee is \$25, which covers all program fees, meals, and testing equipment. To register for any of the IOWATER workshops listed below, or for more specific registration information, please contact the individuals listed for the workshop you are interested in.

Volunteers can sign up two different ways. One by themselves and pay \$25 and get their own set of equipment. Or two as a group and pay \$35 for the first three people and \$10 for each additional person the group gets one set of equipment to share. The group usually gets one manual but if they would like an additional one it can be requested.

#### IOWATER 2006 Level 1 Workshops

<http://www.iowater.net/Workshops/Level1Workshops.htm>

June 2, 5-9 PM

June 3, 9 AM- 3 PM

Emmet County at Sleep Inn & Suites Meeting Room

Bill Moreau [DOnline@myclearwave.net](mailto:DOnline@myclearwave.net)

1820 Central Avenue

Estherville, IA 51334 (712) 260-2507

July 7, 5-9 PM

July 8, 9 AM-3 PM

Woodbury County at Ikes Lodge

Brian Soenen [brian.soenen@ndr.state.ia.us](mailto:brian.soenen@ndr.state.ia.us)

3625 Nebraska Street

Sioux City, IA 51104 (515) 205-8587

July 17, 5-10 PM

July 18, 5-10 PM

Polk County, Jester Park Lodge

Heidi Anderson [handers@co.polk.ia.us](mailto:handers@co.polk.ia.us)

11407 NW Jester Park Drive,

Granger 50109 (515) 323-5360

July 28, 5-9 PM

July 29, 9-AM-3PM

Fayette County, Gilberston Nature Center

Dawn Amundson [gncfcb@alpinecom.net](mailto:gncfcb@alpinecom.net)

22850 A Avenue, Elgin, IA 52141

September, 5-9 PM

September 16, 8 AM-2 PM

Jackson County, Hurstville Interpretive Center

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## CLEAR WATER FROM THE IOWA TO THE MISSISSIPPI: “AWARE 06”

More than 200 volunteers will turn a summer vacation into an adventure during the fourth annual Project AWARE (A Watershed Awareness River Expedition).

Registrations are now being accepted for this weeklong river cleanup. This year, the event will bring volunteers to the Iowa and English rivers in southeast Iowa. The expedition will set out on June 17, from a site near Iowa City, arriving at the Mississippi River on June 24.

Along the way, participants will fish pop cans and plastic sacks from the water, wrench tires and barrels out of muddy embankments and spend their evenings learning about natural resources. Check for registration forms, schedule updates and more at [www.iowaprojectaware.com](http://www.iowaprojectaware.com)

Volunteers can join the expedition for one day, the entire week or anywhere in between. The program provides canoes, free camping, low-cost meals and evening “infotainment” programs.

In addition, look for trash from this year's project at the Iowa State Fair. An artist will help fairgoers turn some of that recovered garbage into a sculpture.

Since its first outing on the Maquoketa River in 2003,

Project AWARE has brought volunteers to a different Iowa watershed every June. Making a public stand for water quality, the program lets everyday citizens make a difference — one stretch of river, one piece of trash at a time.

Project AWARE advocates a perspective based on the “watershed,” or the region of land draining into a body of water. As Project AWARE volunteers learn, much of the trash, chemicals and other materials used on the land will eventually end up in the water.

This year, in response to public demand, Project AWARE's organizers are offering an additional service. Local groups wishing to put on cleanups can apply for CLEAR (Community Leaders Enhancing Area Rivers) mini-grants worth \$1,000. Find more information at [www.iowater.net](http://www.iowater.net)

Two volunteer programs within the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) — IOWATER and the Keepers of the Land — work with numerous sponsors to organize AWARE.

**For more information, contact Brandon Harland at (515) 281-3150 or at [brandon.harland@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:brandon.harland@dnr.state.ia.us)**

• **Check your tires.** Keeping your tires inflated properly can improve gas mileage by more than 3%.

Every gallon of gasoline saved keeps 20 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere!

• **Use less hot water.** It takes a lot of energy to heat water. Use less hot water by installing a low flow showerhead (350 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> saved per year) and washing your clothes in cold or warm water (500 pounds saved per year).

• **Avoid products with a lot of packaging.** You can save 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide if you cut down your garbage by 10%.

• **Adjust your thermostat.** Moving your thermostat down just 2 degrees in winter and up 2 degrees in summer could save about 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

• **Plant a tree.** A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.

• **Be a part of the solution.** Learn more and get active at [ClimateCrisis.net](http://ClimateCrisis.net)

## Iowa Chapter Endorses Ed Fallon in Governor's Race

Leaders of the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club made a first-ever endorsement in a statewide primary race, calling on their 6,000 members to support State Representative Ed Fallon in the four-way race for the Democratic nomination for Governor.

"Ed Fallon has always called on Iowans to recognize that our environment is a vital factor in almost every area of state and national policy," said Pam Mackey-Taylor, Iowa Chapter Chair.

"Throughout his fourteen years in the Iowa House, Ed Fallon has backed key initiatives to protect our environment, conserve our soil and water, and build a sustainable economy based on local initiatives and renewable energy. In addition, he has been the driving force behind efforts to preserve farmland and natural areas from misuse and thoughtless development," Mackey-Taylor continued. "No other candidate for Governor can come close to matching his record."

Iowa Chapter Sierra leaders also cited Fallon's determination to clean up campaign contributions and put Iowa into the ranks of "clean campaign" states, if he is elected Governor. "Campaign spending has spiraled out of control," stated, Charles Winterwood, Chapter leader and former Chapter Legislative Chair. "Special interest groups influence the legislative agenda with big contributions. Elected 'leaders' often kowtow to the lobbyists with the deepest pockets. That puts the vast majority of citizens—most of whom see the importance of protecting our environment—on the outside peering in, while laws are made by a few people in the back rooms."

"A clean campaign law, like they have in Maine and Arizona," said Winterwood, "would do more to help preserve our environment and Iowa's quality of life than anything

else: the record on that is very clear. Ed Fallon is the only candidate who lives by clean campaign principles, and he's the only one who will fight to bring a real campaign reform law to the Governor's desk."

Finally, Iowa Sierra Club leaders cited Fallon's tireless, skillful grassroots organizing work as a key to their endorsement decision. "Throughout its 114-year history, the Sierra Club has relied on educating, engaging and motivating ordinary citizens to help it accomplish often extraordinary things. We reach out to all people who share our concerns and our vision. Ed Fallon works in the same way. He is persuading thousands of Iowans—Democrats, Independents, and Republicans—to take action for *positive* politics and *fair, effective* policies," said Mackey-Taylor.

## Earth Day Legacy Depends on Us

By Doug La Follette

Thirty-six years ago, in 1970, a group of us, led by then Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson organized the first Earth Day. This April, we had the first Earth Day without Senator Nelson, who died last year at the age of 89. It was his vision that made Earth Day happen, but it will be the job of a new generation to keep it going.

As winter gave way to spring in 2006, I was admittedly ambivalent about where we are headed in terms of environmental protection – as a people, as a nation and as a world.

In 1970, the impacts of pollution in America were evident for all to see. Black smoke billowed from smokestacks and dead fish floated in polluted rivers. People across America knew our country was getting polluted but we didn't quite know what to do about it. Senator Nelson, seeing a need for national leadership, spearheaded not only the first Earth Day, but also a movement in the United States Congress to write legislation to protect our environment.

As a result, the following years brought some great successes. Congress passed the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. The federal government created fuel economy standards for cars and trucks, and state after state passed legislation to ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations.

Somewhere along the line – perhaps coinciding with the rise of conservative talk radio and conservative cable news

programming – positive feelings about our collective work to protect the environment turned into a backlash against "tree huggers."

Sadly, as we celebrated Earth Day 2006 this year, we are without the kind of leadership Senator Nelson and others provided at the national level. Not only has Congress not passed a meaningful piece of conservation legislation in the past decade, the current administration has made it a priority to *roll-back* previously designated environmental protections. This is a discouraging state of affairs.

However, I am heartened by what I see when I travel across America and visit with people in their communities. For example, I spent this past Earth Day in Montana. People there, in that relatively conservative state, are interested in another type of "conserv" – *conservation* – and are concerned about issues like global climate change.

Montanans know first hand what is at stake. The glaciers in beautiful Glacier National Park are melting at an alarming rate and will be gone, scientists say, within the next 30 years. Farmers and ranchers have suffered nearly a decade of dry weather and increased temperatures, making an already difficult job even harder. Talk to hunting and fishing enthusiasts and learn that the ducks are on the decline and rising river temperatures are putting a real strain on the trout habitat in the land of Norman McLean's beloved Blackfoot River.

Montana's former United States Senators Mike Mansfield and Lee Metcalf worked with Senator Gaylord Nelson

on the legislation that was born out of the original Earth Day movement. Current Senator Max Baucus marshaled the most recent Clean Air Act through the United States Senate in 1990 and Governor Brian Schweitzer this year launched a special committee to deal specifically with climate change issues. What I see in Montana gives me hope.

But hope is not enough. Ensuring a healthy climate for future generations will take action. And like it or not, leadership on these issues will not come from Washington, D.C. Unlike the obvious effects of the 60's and 70's – dead fish and smokestacks – the current issues facing us are more difficult to see. We can't see greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, we can't taste mercury in the fish we eat, and a change in temperature of one degree here and there doesn't seem like a big deal.

Our "leaders" will have to be led by us. They are going to need all of us to give them the courage to lead and the will to take a stand. It's not about the environment versus the economy or liberal versus conservative, it's about ensuring that our children and grandchildren have the same opportunities that we have. That was Senator Nelson's vision and it can be our future.

*Doug La Follette is an original Earth Day organizer, former Sierra Club Board Director and the current Secretary of State of Wisconsin.*

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**To get your legislators' names, addresses, and phone numbers at any time of the year, call 515-281-5129.**

*For our Families . . . For our Future.*

## PROTECT AMERICA'S ENVIRONMENT

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