



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2020

- [Personal Flotation Devices save family of four at Green Valley State Park](#)
- [Efforts to remove carp continue at Hickory Grove Lake](#)

## Personal Flotation Devices save family of four at Green Valley State Park

CRESTON, Iowa – On April 28, 2020, at approximately 5:00pm, a bystander called 911 after noticing a capsized raft with a family of four on Green Valley Lake.

All four members of the family were wearing Personal Flotation Devices, also known as life jackets, but were struggling outside of the buoys of the beach area. At the time, strong winds gusting to over 35mph, cold water temperatures and inexperience made for an exhausting effort by the family.

The two adults and two children were able to swim to shore. Rescue personnel from the Creston's Greater Regional Medical Center, the Union County Sheriff's Office, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources met the family at the shore and provided immediate medical attention. All four family members' lives were saved in part to their personal flotation devices.

The Iowa DNR stresses the importance of wearing PFD's, no matter the circumstances and no matter the skill of the person. Iowa law requires all children 13 years or younger to wear an approved PFD while in a vessel on Iowa waters, unless below deck in an enclosed cabin, or on a commercial vessel with 25 or more people. All vessels, including kayaks and canoes, operating on Iowa waterways are required by law to have the same number of approved PFDs on board as passengers present.

"Just as we saw in this incident, the simple act of wearing a Personal Flotation Device could absolutely save your life and the lives of your friends and family members," said Jason Hyde, DNR Park Ranger. "The appearance or inconvenience are no excuse for risking your life."

DNR conservation officers and other law enforcement are present on the waterways throughout the state monitoring, educating and enforcing these laws on a regular basis during the spring, summer and fall months.

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## Efforts to remove carp continue at Hickory Grove Lake

COLO, Iowa – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Story County Conservation (SCC) plan to start drawing down Hickory Grove Lake near Colo in early May to remove common carp. The lake will remain drained until fall.

In 2019, SCC and the DNR partnered to remove carp from Hickory Grove Lake by draining as much of the lake as possible. “Post draw-down netting suggested that we had successfully eliminated the carp,” said Ben Dodd, Iowa DNR Fisheries biologist. “Unfortunately, we observed several adult fish last week as the lake was refilling. Complete eradication of an undesirable species from a lake and its watershed is a difficult task, but we’re developing a new plan to complete the job.”

Hickory Grove Lake is a popular outdoor recreation destination in Story County, boasting a variety of activities including swimming, paddling, boating, watching wildlife and angling. Water quality in the lake has declined since the early 2000’s, due to nutrient and sediment pollution and a large population of common carp. In recent years, carp have become so abundant in Hickory Grove Lake that they eliminated aquatic plants from the lake.

Common Carp is an invasive fish species that negatively impacts water quality and sport fish populations in Iowa lakes. They uproot and destroy aquatic plants when they feed. Sediment and nutrients are also resuspended into the water column during this process, which can lead to increased undesirable algae blooms.

SCC and DNR recently partnered to improve water quality and recreational opportunities at Hickory Grove Lake through a variety of lake restoration practices, including shoreline deepening and armoring, revamping the beach and campground area of the park, dredging the eastern portion of the lake, making improvements to the dam and lake outlet structure, and installing a variety of fish habitat structures in the lake.

All project partners are committed to a successful lake restoration and will continue to strive for the best possible result. We intend to maximize the lake’s social, physical, and economic benefits and know that Hickory Grove Lake will again be a popular recreation destination. We thank residents and visitors for their interest and excitement in this project.

**Media Contacts:** Ben Dodd, Fisheries Management Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources; [ben.dodd@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:ben.dodd@dnr.iowa.gov); 641-891-3795, or Michael Cox, Director, Story County Conservation; [mcox@storycountyiowa.gov](mailto:mcox@storycountyiowa.gov); 515-232-2516.

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The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is working with state and local officials to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and has transitioned employees to work remotely. DNR offices are closed to the public during this time and only available by appointment.

In other efforts to further reduce the spread of Covid-19, the DNR is encouraging the use of the online services for purchasing licenses, submitting applications, payments and other daily tasks and interaction with DNR staff.

The **FREE Go Outdoors Iowa app** is available at the App store and Google Play. The Go Outdoors Iowa app allows users to purchase and view hunting and fishing licenses and submit harvest and quota reports, all from your cell phone.

**Full list of DNR's online services:** <https://www.iowadnr.gov/about-dnr/about-dnr/online-services-databases>.

**Up-to-date information on DNR services, facilities and events impacted by Covid-19:** <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Covid-19>.

**Technical information for regulated businesses in regards to Covid-19:**<https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Social-Media-Press-Room/Disaster-Assistance#3057321-covid---19-outbreak>.

Thank you for your patience and flexibility during this time. If you need to contact DNR staff you can reach them by email or phone or by calling (515) 725-8200.