



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EcoNewsWire

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Water Summary Update: August brings drought conditions to nearly entire state

MEDIA CONTACT: Tim Hall, Iowa DNR, 515-452-6633 or Tim.Hall@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES — August 2020 was the third driest August in 148 years of statewide records despite the Derecho storm event, according to the latest Water Summary Update.

Significant state-wide dryness throughout August caused an expansion of drought conditions, with nearly the entire state rated in some form of dryness or drought. The last United States Drought Monitor depiction for August showed that 99 percent of Iowa was in the D0-D3 category (abnormally dry to extreme drought), which was the largest expanse since August 27, 2013.

"The month of August was the third driest on record for Iowa with barely more than an inch of rain falling," said Tim Hall, DNR's coordinator of hydrology resources. "For the summer, the state was short on rainfall by nearly five inches, which means that Iowa has a significant deficit of moisture to make up for this fall."

Precipitation deficits of two to four inches were reported across much of Iowa during August, leading to an intensification and expansion of dryness and drought. Some stations in southeastern Iowa observed deficits of more than four inches. Monthly precipitation totals ranged from 0.11 inch at Salem in Henry County to 5.31 inches at Lake Mills in Winnebago County.

"Widespread rainfall this week should help to improve conditions in September. The current Drought Monitor shows some limited improvement, but the rain that fell after Tuesday morning will be reflected in next week's drought monitor," Hall said. "The past several years, September and October have been wet, and a repeat of that pattern will help hydrologic conditions as Iowa heads into the fall months."

Compared to overall warm conditions in July, temperatures moderated across Iowa in August with a statewide average temperature of 71.9 degrees, 0.4 degrees above normal. August 2020 ties 1921 as the 72nd warmest on record with a warmer August last occurring in 2016.

Streamflow conditions across much of the state are in normal conditions. The Des Moines, Skunk, Raccoon, Chariton, and East Fork 102 River basins have moved into the below normal condition since the last water summary update. Field crews have been out collecting low flow measurements.

For a thorough review of Iowa's water resource trends, go to www.iowadnr.gov/watersummaryupdate.

The report is prepared by technical staff from Iowa DNR, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, IHR—Hydroscience and Engineering, and the U.S. Geological Survey, in collaboration with Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department.

Online information available for Lake Ahquabi Water Quality Improvement Plan

MEDIA CONTACT: Jeff Berckes at 515-725-8391 or jeff.berckes@dnr.iowa.gov.

INDIANOLA – Iowans interested in the results of a DNR study to improve water quality in Lake Ahquabi in Warren County can view a presentation on the Iowa DNR's YouTube channel.

Lake Ahquabi is on the state's list of impaired waters for high levels of algae. The current study, or DNR water quality improvement plan, shows how these problems are caused by too much phosphorus in the lake. The problems impact recreation on the lake and aquatic life.

The plan explores the amounts and sources of phosphorus entering the lake and offers potential solutions to reduce those levels and work toward fixing the problem. The document is designed as a guide for local resource agencies, partners, stakeholders and residents to improve the lake.

The presentation is available now at youtube.com/iowadnr through Oct. 12. The full document can be downloaded on the Iowa DNR's website at the following: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WaterQuality/WatershedImprovement/WatershedResearchData/WaterImprovementPlans/PublicMeetingsPlans.aspx>.

Public comments on the plan must be submitted by Oct. 12 to the following:

E-mail: jeff.berckes@dnr.iowa.gov

Mail: Jeff Berckes, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St. Des Moines, Iowa 50319

After gathering Iowans' comments, the DNR will forward the final plan, also called by its technical name of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

Feedback requested on information gathered for lower Missouri River flood risk management project

MEDIA CONTACT: Tim Hall, DNR, 515-452-6633 or Tim.Hall@dnr.iowa.gov

DES MOINES -- The Iowa DNR and partner agencies are requesting lowans' review of information gathered from a series of public meetings held this summer to identify areas prone to flooding along the Missouri River in Iowa.

The information gathered from these meetings has been organized into a single document that contains comments for locations along the Iowa side of Missouri River. The document and location map can be accessed at iowadnr.gov/simra.

"We are interested in hearing back from those who were part of the initial meetings to verify that our information is correct, and to see if there is more information we can add to our list," said Tim Hall, Hydrology Resources Coordinator for the DNR. "Our deadline for additional information is Sept. 24, and then we will hold virtual stakeholder meetings in late September. We plan to review the updated information before we have discussions with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in October."

The larger, multi-state effort is in response to near-historic levels in the Missouri River in 2019. The unprecedented amount of runoff resulted in the lower Missouri River staying above flood stage at multiple locations for nearly nine months, causing billions of dollars of damage to homes, businesses, agricultural production, levees and natural resources across five states, including Iowa.

The information gathered and analysis completed will be documented in a flood risk management plan for the entire lower Missouri River, which can be used at the state and local level to help inform flood risk management decisions moving forward.

The project is a partnership between the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Kansas Water Office, and the Kansas City and Omaha districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A note on Iowa DNR and COVID-19

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 another effort to further reduce the spread of COVID-19, the DNR is encouraging the use of the online services for submitting applications, payments and other daily tasks and interaction with DNR staff.

- [Full list of DNR's online services](#)
- [Up-to-date information on DNR services, facilities and events impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [Technical information for regulated businesses in regards to COVID-19](#)

We 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.