



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EcoNewsWire

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Water quality contracts on Environmental Protection Commission agenda

MEDIA CONTACT: Jerah Sheets at 515-313-8909 or Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES— Two water quality contracts are up for approval at the Jan. 20 Environmental Protection Commission's teleconference meeting.

Commissioners will meet by video conference at 10 a.m. To join by video, connect with <https://meet.google.com/pcd-ryjg-uoa>. To join by phone, call 240-794-2779, and enter the PIN code of 934 190 235 followed by the pound (#) sign. The meeting is open to the public. There is no scheduled public participation. Written comments may be submitted up to one day before the meeting to Jerah Sheets at Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov or to DNR, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319.

Commissioners will be asked to approve a contract to create a comprehensive watershed management plan to improve water quality in the headwaters of the South Skunk River.

A second proposed contract aids in understanding the effectiveness of previous statewide water quality education efforts and positions partners to communicate effectively to reduce future nonpoint pollution.

In other action, commissioners will be asked to rule on the appeal of a proposed flood-plain-permit decision.

The complete agenda follows:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Monthly Reports

Director's Remarks

Contract with Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority

Contract with Iowa State University

20DNR0016 Appeal/Flood Plain Permit

General Discussion

- Summer Joint NRC/EPC Meeting

Items for Next Month's Meeting

- 16
- March 16

Find more information at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Boards-Commissions>.

Commissioners include: Ralph Lents, Menlo, chair; Harold Hommes, Windsor Heights, vice chair; Bob Sinclair, Sigourney, Secretary; Rebecca Dostal, Traer; Stephanie Dykshorn, Ireton; Amy Echard, Farmersburg; Lisa Gochenour, Logan; Rebecca Guinn, Bettendorf; and Howard Hill, Cambridge. Kayla Lyon is the DNR director.

Water Summary Update: drought remains following a dry 2020

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

DES MOINES — Drought and abnormally dry conditions remain across Iowa with drought boundaries remaining status quo, following a 2020 that ranked as the 36th driest year on record in Iowa, according to the latest Water Summary Update.

In December, statewide precipitation totaled 0.94 inches, or 0.4 inches below normal. Multiple winter systems moved through Iowa, leaving behind measurable snow statewide. In 2020, precipitation was below normal for 8 of the 12 months of the year, and was significantly below normal during the summer months of July and August. Year-end precipitation totals showed a statewide average precipitation accumulation of 28.92 inches, 6.18 inches below normal. A drier year last occurred in 2012.

"As Iowa moved from a very wet 2019 through a very dry 2020, many of our hydrologic conditions have deteriorated," said Tim Hall, DNR's coordinator of hydrology resources. "There is concern for dryness and drought as we move from winter to spring of 2021, and the DNR and our partners are watching conditions closely."

Iowa began 2020 free from any drought or dryness, with the first indication of dryness appearing in the U.S. Drought Monitor on May 12, progressing through June and July. The worst of the conditions formed in west central Iowa, where areas of extreme drought appeared in early August. By Sept. 8, the state experienced its worst drought conditions of 2020, with almost 15 percent of the state designated as being in extreme drought. By

early October, that designation had shifted to northwest Iowa, where about four percent of the state remained in extreme drought heading into 2021.

Temperatures in December averaged 27.2 degrees, or 4.3 degrees above normal, tying 1975 as the 48th warmest December on record. Lamoni reported the month's high temperature of 66 degrees on Dec. 10, while several locations across the state reported the month's low temperature of -7 degrees on Dec. 25. For 2020, Iowa temperatures averaged 49.2 degrees, or 1 degree above normal.

Streamflow conditions across most of the state remain normal. Flows in the Des Moines and Raccoon river basins continue as below normal.

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.

Application period for DNR Food Storage Capacity Grants ending soon

MEDIA CONTACT: Tom Anderson, DNR, at tom.anderson@dnr.iowa.gov or 515-725-8323.

DES MOINES — The DNR will accept applications for its Food Storage Capacity grant program until 4 p.m. Jan. 21.

This is the second round of grant funding offered by the DNR to help address food waste, an issue that negatively impacts environmental, economic and social sustainability in Iowa and across the country.

The competitive grant opportunity helps efforts to expand storage and cold storage of donated food. Food banks, food pantries and other non-profit organizations receiving donated food for distribution to food insecure Iowans are eligible to apply.

Information and application materials can be downloaded at www.iowadnr.gov/FABA.

Online information available for Hickory Grove Lake Water Quality Improvement Plan

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

NEVADA — Iowans interested in the results of a DNR study to improve water quality in Hickory Grove Lake in Story County can view a presentation on the Iowa DNR's YouTube channel.

Hickory Grove Lake 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 Feb. 15. The full document can be downloaded on the Iowa DNR's website: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WaterQuality/WatershedImprovement/WatershedResearchData/WaterImprovementPlans/PublicMeetingsPlans.aspx>.

Public comments on the plan must be submitted by Feb. 15 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.

DNR enforcement actions

MEDIA CONTACT: Tamara McIntosh, DNR, at 515-725-8242
or Tamara.McIntosh@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES – DNR staff work with individuals, businesses and communities to help them protect our natural resources by complying with state and federal laws. This approach is very effective. In the few cases where compliance cannot be achieved, the DNR issues enforcement actions. The following list summarizes recent enforcement actions. Find the entire, original orders on DNR's website at www.iowadnr.gov/EnforcementActions

Amendments

Iowa County

Thomas Chris Dodge & Ronald Schintler

Waiver of accrued administrative penalties and rescission of prior order.

Air Quality permits under review

MEDIA CONTACT: Marnie Stein, DNR, at 515-725-9525
or Marnie.Stein@dnr.iowa.gov for Title V permits.

DES MOINES – The DNR Air Quality Bureau has the following draft permits up for review. The permits help protect Iowans' health and air quality. DNR's permitting staff review each permit application to ensure facilities comply with state and federal air quality requirements. We encourage public comments on draft permits, providing help on how to [make effective comments](#). Submit written comments to the assigned permit writer

before 4:30 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. DNR considers public comments before finalizing the permits.

Title V Operating Permits

Title V Operating permits are reviewed and re-issued every five years. Facilities with a Title V permit have the potential to emit large amounts of air pollutants compared to other facilities. The five-year reviews are a federal requirement and ensure adequate monitoring is included in the permit. The DNR plans to issue Title V Operating Permits for the following facilities. Find permit details at www.iowadnr.gov/titlev-draft.

Lee County

Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy, Inc. – 2597 Hwy. 61 S., Fort Madison.
The application was submitted to operate their existing turbines and turbine generator sets (SIC: 3511) facility. The public comment period ends Feb. 13.

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.



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