

IOWATER

Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
109 Trowbridge Hall
Iowa City, IA 52242-1319

Summer 2008

Newsletter 2008-2

IOWATER

Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring

Certified Samplers: working with agriculture to improve watershed health

by Mike Tidman, Iowa Soybean Association

Millions of dollars are spent every year to improve watershed health, yet the impact of those investments is unknown due to a lack of data. As local watershed communities evaluate the best strategies for addressing water quality concerns, they see that data is essential in understanding their watershed – including the impact of land and agricultural management practices.

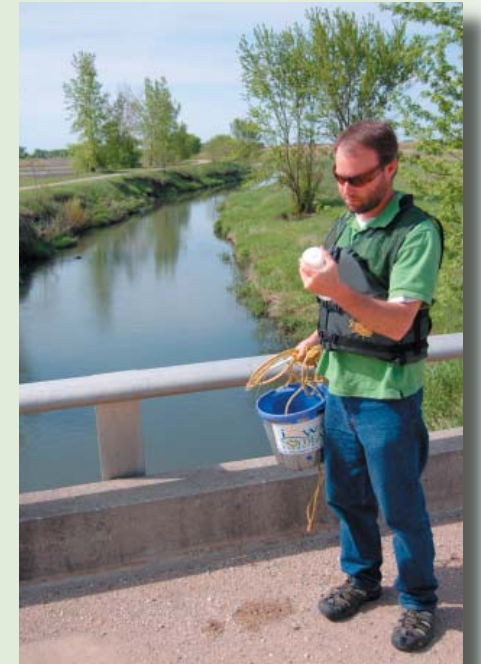
The Iowa Soybean Association (ISA) and Agriculture's Clean Water Alliance (ACWA) are coordinating a broad water sampling network of 18 Certified Samplers (many who were trained by IOWATER) who pull samples from 149 sites in the Raccoon and Des Moines River Watersheds.

The water sampling coordinated by ACWA and ISA complements the work of many agencies and organizations, including IOWATER. It is also working alongside large-scale efforts by ISA to help farmers evaluate management practices in farm fields through the ISA Environmental Programs. As the monitoring data accumulates and farmers evaluate their management practices, linkages may emerge between environmental performance and management decisions made on the farm.

Dave Coppess of Heartland Co-op is President of ACWA. Coppess says ACWA's objective is to establish a comprehensive database of water quality monitoring information. "We've made this investment so we can understand which farming practices are good for both farmers and the environment. We hope our model can be used throughout Iowa, the Midwest and possibly the entire country, as agriculture works to improve watershed health."

ISA Water Quality Technician Anthony Seeman oversees the water quality monitoring activities and says the data is helping ISA prioritize subwatersheds for further investigation. "Some of what we are doing is zeroing in on what we believe may be hotspots. We've already been able to identify problems and change some individual operator management practices upstream. That's real impact."

(continued on page 3)



IOWATER

presents the

2008 River of Words®

IOWA

Environmental Poetry & Art Winners

works created by K-12 students in Iowa



2008 NATIONAL FINALIST in Art

Lupita Delgado, age 11
Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City, Iowa
Foxy

Staff Comments...

What a mess...in the wake of record floods and tornadoes, these three simple words seem to be an appropriate tagline for 2008. Entire towns have been flattened by winds and swallowed up by waters, and tragically, many lives have been lost. Our hearts go out to all those affected by these disasters.

What a mess...while these words convey sadness, they also hold undercurrents of hope and inspiration. In the midst of these tragic events, Iowans have shown the world just how extraordinary they are. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, they have been working together – neighbor with neighbor, community with community, stranger with stranger – to overcome this time of adversity and to come alive again, stronger than ever.

What a mess...every beat of the hammer, buzz of the saw, and crunch of removed debris helps lead Iowa down the road to recovery. Thankfully, behind many of these sounds is a person, many of whom are volunteers – thousands of people who want nothing more than to help other people.

What a mess...on August 2-9, Project AWARE will provide an opportunity for volunteers to clean up the Winnebago, Shell Rock, and Cedar rivers from Mason City to Cedar Falls. As a small facet of a much larger recovery effort, we hope to do our part to help transform this mess into a memory.

See 'ya on the river,

Brian Soenen
Project AWARE Coordinator

WORLD WATER MONITORING DAY

To participate, monitor your IOWATER site between Sept. 18th and Oct. 18th and submit the data to the IOWATER database by Oct. 31st. IOWATER will send the data to World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD) to be included in their world-wide data collection effort. For more information about WWMD, visit www.worldwatermonitoring-day.org/index.html

ONLINE AGAIN!

After a two-year hiatus, *The Volunteer Monitor*, a national newsletter for volunteer monitoring groups, has resumed. The Summer 2008 issue will be available soon on the EPA's volunteer monitoring web site at www.epa.gov/owow/volunteer/vm_index.html and includes a feature about an IOWATER volunteer, Dave Ratliff, who spearheaded a monitoring project and action campaign that ultimately led to statewide legislation.



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Upcoming events ... cleanups, snapshots, & more.



Aug. 16 (Sat); Boone River Cleanup (Briggs to Albrights)
Contact: Brian Stroner at (515)832-9147
brian.stroner@webstercity.com

Aug. 16 (Sat); Xstream Cleanup 2008 (Quad Cities)
Contact: Erin Robinson (563)386-9575
erobinson@wastecom.com

Aug. 16 (Sat); River Run Garbage Grab (Des Moines River)
Contact: Robin Fortney rbfortney@msn.com

Aug. 22-24 (Fri-Sun); Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup project Allen's Grove to Walter's Landing (McCausland)
Contact: Melisa Jacobsen (coordinator@lowerwapsicleanup.org)

Sep. 20 (Sat); Dragoon River Romp. Contact: Lois Powers (515)433-0591, loisp@boonelandfill.org

Sep. 27 (Sat); Beaver and Walnut Creek Snapshot
Contact: Steve Witmer (515)727-7765
switmer@ci.johnston.ia.us

Oct. 4 (Sat); Dry Run Creek Watershed Snapshot (Cedar Falls)
Contact: Rebecca Kauten (319)296-3262
Rebecca.Kauten@ia.usda.gov

Oct. 8 (Wed); Polk County Snapshot
Contact: Susan Heathcote (515)244-1194 ext. 205
heathcote@iaenvironment.org

Oct. 11 (Sat); Johnson and Iowa County Snapshot
Contact: Dave Ratliff (319)354-1397
oldmanscreek@qwest.net

Oct. 11 (Sat); Squaw Creek Watershed Snapshot
Contact: Rick Dietz rsdietz@yahoo.com

Oct. 11 (Sat); IOWATER Fall Statewide Snapshot
Contact: Lynette Seigley (319)335-1598
Lynette.Seigley@dnr.iowa.gov

Oct. 20 (Mon); Carroll Trail and River Cleanup Project
Contact: Mary Koester at (712)792-2123
dnkoes@mchsi.com

IOWATER 2008 Level I Workshop Schedule

Date & Time	Location	Contact	Phone	E-mail
July 30 (6-10 PM) July 31 (6-10 PM) @ Wapsi River Env. Ed. Center	Scott Co.	Dave Murcia Scott CCB 31555 52nd Ave. Dixon, IA 52745	(563) 328-3286	jmurcia@scottcountyia.com
Aug 15 (5-9 PM) Aug 16 (9 AM- 3 PM) @ Prairie's Edge Nature Center	Howard Co.	Michael Praska 311 7th St. SW #2 Cresco, IA 52136	(563) 547-3040	mike.praska@ia.usda.gov
Sep 5 (5-9 PM) Sep 6 (9 AM- 3 PM) @ Jefferson County Nature Center	Jefferson Co.	Jack Eastman 2587 New Glasgow Rd. Fairfield, IA 52556	(641) 451-0208	jacktoni@iowatelecom.net
Sep 26 (5-9 PM) Sep 27 (9 AM- 3 PM) @ Prairie Heritage Center	O'Brien Co.	Charlene Elyea O'Brien CCB 4931 Yellow Ave. Peterson, IA 51047	(712) 295-7200	occb@iowatelecom.net

To register for a workshop, contact the appropriate person listed above.

Answers to WATERSHED QUIZ on page 6
1. b; 2. d; 3. a; 4. c; 5. d

QUIZ: Watersheds and land use impacts

- What is a Watershed?
 - An area of land owned by one person
 - An area of land that drains into a waterbody
 - Each county has its own watershed
 - A shed to keep water in
- Which of the following land uses would affect water quality of a waterbody?
 - Row crop
 - Urban areas
 - Pasture
 - All land uses affect water quality
- Where do nutrients causing the Hypoxic zone originate?

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Mississippi River Watershed Iowa 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The entire United States The Mississippi River
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- If point source pollution usually comes from a pipe, where does non-point pollution come from?

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The same pipe The whole watershed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Another pipe Nowhere
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- Which of the following is not a common Best Management Practice that can be used in a watershed?
 - Soil testing
 - Enrollment of environmentally sensitive land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
 - Slowing soil runoff by using riparian buffers and stream bank stabilization techniques
 - They are all common Best Management Practices

Answers at the bottom of page 7.



IOWATER action!

Press releases, events, & news articles involving IOWATER monitors – Many thanks to all of you for your continued efforts.

- Benton County** – Vinton-Shellsburg Middle School eighth graders and teacher Jennifer Hancock conducted water testing of the Cedar River.
- Delaware County** – West Delaware eighth graders tested waters of Delaware County and hosted a Rivers Day which included guided tours of their water quality projects.
- Dubuque County** – Students at Table Mound Elementary School, also known as “Streamkeepers,” along with teacher Cyndie Nelson and retired science teacher Dave Carnahan conducted water testing of the Middle Fork of Catfish Creek.
- Kossuth County** – The Bishop Garrigan ecology class and trip leaders Scott Moeller and Beany Bode tested the East Fork of the Des Moines River on their annual canoe trip.
- Pottawattamie County** – Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) high school teachers Diane LeDoux and Kristen Newton and their students conducted water testing of Pony Creek and the ISD wetland.

If we missed your happenings, please call or email Jackie Gautsch with an update.

Certified Samplers (cont)

“Aside from immediate benefits like that, ACWA water monitoring is adding a lot more to the general body of knowledge about agricultural non-point source water pollution science. It’s part of ACWA’s collaborative nature – to learn and share information.”

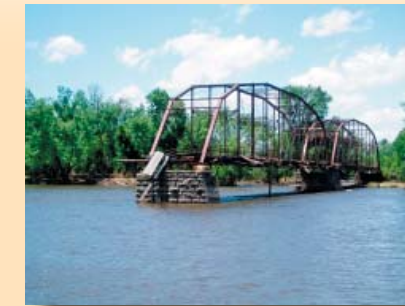
Matt Carlson of Lake City is a Certified Sampler for the ACWA / ISA monitoring program. He says he does it because he wants to know what’s in the water. “This is a good place to live, so we have to be careful of what goes into our streams and rivers. We are all aware of the demands on ag right now, and we see people focused on production. But I don’t want us to overlook the safety of our water. Since farmers are the number one users of chemicals and fertilizers, they play an important environmental role in our community.”

Anthony Seeman says “Bringing IOWATER-trained samplers into our monitoring network works smoothly for us. They’re already familiar with QA/QC procedures – for example, they’re familiar with water sampling protocols such as the three rinses when sampling. It’s just easier for them to hit the ground running.” He feels the certified samplers have done great work in keeping the sampling regime going through this year’s unusual weather cycle. “During all the flooding and bad weather, we only missed 2 out of 94 scheduled samples. Those are outstanding results, and we’d like to thank the IOWATER volunteers for doing a great job.”

For more information, visit: www.isafarmnet.com/ep www.iasoybeans.com www.acwa-rrws.org

FLOOD of 2008

The flooding of 2008 was one of the most devastating natural disasters in Iowa’s history. Thousand of Iowans lost homes, businesses, personal mementos, and possessions. To date, nearly three-quarters of Iowa’s counties have been declared presidential disaster areas and the damage assessment is already in the billions of dollars with more certainly to come. In the days leading up to the floods, activities focused on preventing water from entering homes and businesses. As the water receded, the focus shifted to recovery and rebuilding. As floodwaters waned, people began to ask questions about the rivers. What factors contributed to the flooding? Could the flooding have been prevented or reduced in size and impact? What was the quality of the water during the flood? Has the water quality improved post-flood and is it safe to swim or boat?



Damaged remains of Sutliff Bridge over the Cedar River following the historic flooding in June.



Aerial view of the University of Iowa Memorial Union during the height of flooding on the Iowa River in June. Photo by Univ. Relations, Univ. of Iowa.

The DNR Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Program worked closely with the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory to test the quality of Iowa’s rivers during the flooding event in order to help answer the immediate questions about safety associated with being in or near the water. While results are still coming in, data collected so far show us that the massive amounts of water during the flooding diluted the concentration of chemicals that may have entered streams from businesses, homes, and farmland. Within a few weeks of the flooding, bacteria levels had returned to normal ranges found in Iowa streams during the summer months. Stay tuned for more results in future newsletters...

River of Words®

Every year, River of Words® conducts an international environmental poetry and art competition for youth aged 5 to 19 in grades K-12, in affiliation with The Library of Congress Center for the Book. This free contest is designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of the place they live, and to express what they discover through poetry and art. Iowa entries not chosen as finalists or grand prize winners in the international contest are returned to IOWATER, where they are judged in a statewide IOWA River of Words® Environmental Poetry and Art competition.

The IOWATER Volunteer Water Monitoring Program of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources coordinates the IOWA River of Words® Environmental Poetry and Art competition. This year, over 350 students from Iowa entered the contest, either through their schools, community art centers, local libraries, or on their own. Because of the large number of quality Iowa entries, we accepted the generous offer of the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art to host a juried River of Words® IOWA Environmental Poetry and Art Exhibit. Fifty-one works of poetry and art were selected to be included in this exhibit, which was scheduled to be shown July 13th thru August 3rd, but had to be postponed due to the flooding of downtown Cedar Rapids! We are hoping to reschedule the exhibit for sometime in September.

Shown here are the winning entries for each category in this year's Iowa competition. We hope you enjoy these efforts by Iowa's youth to explore and understand our environment, and to express their experiences through art and poetry.



IOWA WINNER Grades K-3 Art
Addeline Kelley, age 7
Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City, Iowa
Fishing for Dinner

Words Flow Like a River

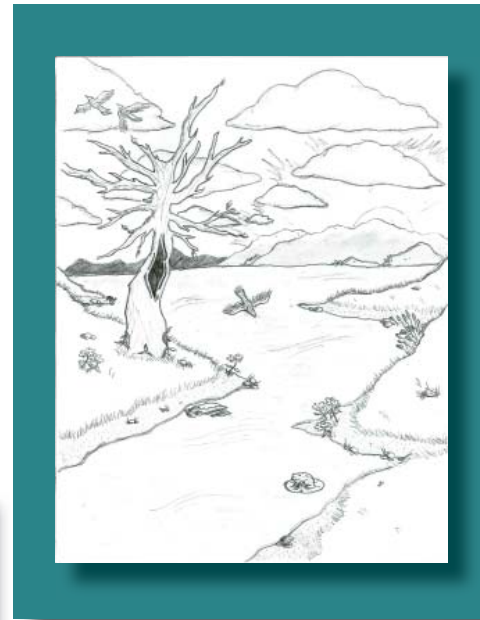
rivers flow
words flow
they all mix in
and move smoothly
up and down and
all around
side to side and back
you write lots
of things and
let them flow
and soon enough
they make sense
and a river flows
in all directions
and soon comes
to a stop to a
certain point when it's inanimate
and then you start
over and if it doesn't
make sense you just
think it through
and go again

IOWA WINNER Grades 7-9 Poetry
Lorissa Kaye Mauch, age 13
Anthon-Oto Maple Valley Middle School
Anthon-Oto, Iowa
Words Flow Like a River

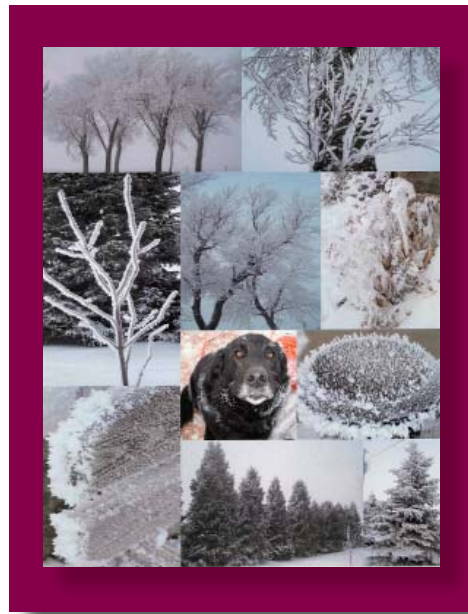
Iowa Pond

I look at nature.
Watch birds fly and frogs splash.
Days and nights, dawns and dusks.
It is always changing.
White and hard in winter.
Rocks just click and skid on ice.
Muddy and dark in summer.
Rocks will splash and ka-thump!
Tracks and sounds all winter.
Animals and insects all summer.
Our pond is nature.
It is always changing a little.
I'm glad we have it near us
all year long.

IOWA WINNER Grades K-3 Poetry
Tristan Paton, age 5½
Fairfield, Iowa
Iowa Pond

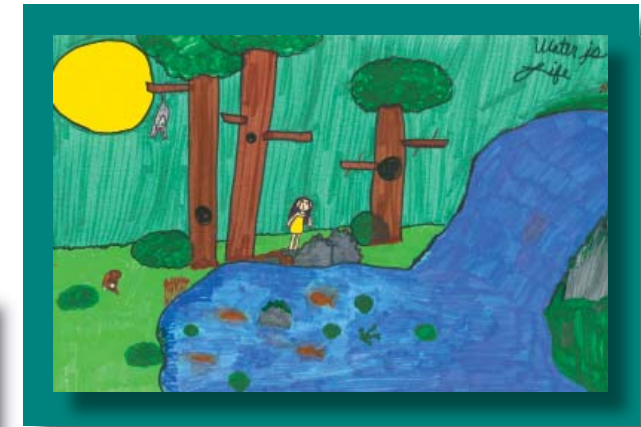
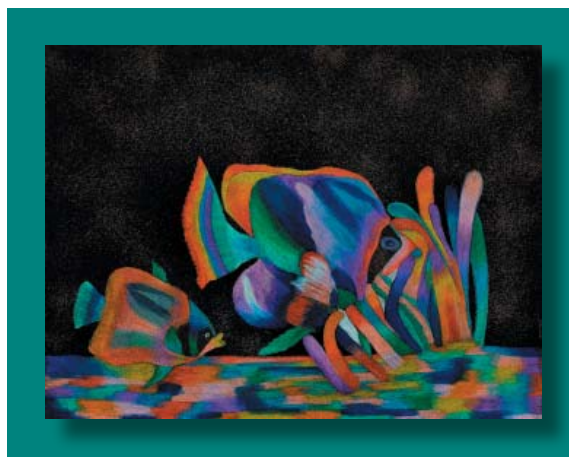


IOWA WINNER Grades 7-9 Art
Cory Sullivan, age 14
Waverly, Iowa
A Simple Beginning



IOWA WINNER Photography
Rebecca White
age 12
Peterson, Iowa
Frosty February

Three-time IOWA WINNER Grades 10-12 Art
Scott Skophammer
age 16
Ft. Dodge, Iowa
Crystal Clear Water



IOWA WINNER Grades 4-6 Art
Lucy Besch
age 12
Manson Northwest Webster School
Barnum, Iowa
Water is Life

Rainy Day Lake

Soaring down from the ocean clouds a mallard wets its wings.
The skin slowly ripples as a catfish wades below.
Emerging from the pool of darkness the bullfrog sits content.
A cricket moves the bow against the string and hesitates.
Gently bowing to the silent expanse the willow waits.
A clap of thunder and a sea of water fills the lake.

IOWA WINNER Grades 10-12 Poetry
Jeralyn Westercamp, age 16
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Rainy Day Lake

Jamaica

When I lived in Jamaica
The ocean there was wavy like my mom's hair.
And I held a seashell to my ear.

IOWA WINNERS Grades 4-6 Poetry

Shuda Jarboe age 11 Urbandale, Iowa <i>My Friend, the River</i>	Darian Lisle age 10 Sioux City Art Center Sioux City, Iowa <i>Jamaica</i>
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My Friend, the River

My friend, the River,
Beckoning, then racing
Ahead, and tripping over
Stones, its bubbly laughter
Floating down to me, while I
Chase her, running, acting like
A fool, stumbling, falling, she
Catches me. We continue,
Playing an endless game of
Hide-and-go-seek, we run
As one person, united in a
World, talking, laughing, joking,
In a world where there are different
Ways, where twisting turning rivers are
Endless, and they never have to stop,
Never. But taking a break is such a
Wonderful thought. I lie down,
And I sleep by my friend, the River.

For more information

about River of Words®
or to enter the 2009 competition,
please visit www.iowater.net
and click on the River of Words® logo.