



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Noddleman Island is Western Iowa's secret wild playground



*Noddleman Island is a quick drive south of Council Bluffs within eyeshot of I-29. It's home to a network of potholes for kayakers and marsh bird enthusiasts and plenty of space for hiking and hunting. Visitors can see native plants like false indigo bush, Canada anemone, wild strawberries, wild grapes, cord grass and more. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.*

The old advertising tag line – *just waiting to be explored* – could have been written for Noddleman Island Wildlife Management Area on the east shore of the Missouri River.

The nearly 1,300 acres of public Iowa wildland sits just a stone's throw west of I-29, a few miles southwest of Glenwood and less than 30 minutes from Council Bluffs and Omaha. It offers the curious an opportunity at seeing some unique Iowa birds, hike a floodplain, hunt with little competition and experience an ecosystem in the process of being restored.

Noddleman Island has two distinct personalities – one is mild, the other is not.

The mild is mild– a network of potholes next to the access lane within eyeshot of I-29 provides a quick trip for kayakers, marsh bird enthusiasts and duck hunters. The non-mild requires hunters, bird watchers or explorers to hike in carrying their gear, navigating a drainage ditch that is usually flowing with water just to get to the island part of the area.

But once on the island, it's likely to be a solitary experience, except for the resident wildlife - quail, pheasants, deer, waterfowl and more.

"If you're willing to hike, you'll likely have the area to yourself and see some pretty cool stuff," said Lindsey Barney, district forester for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Visitors can see native plants like false indigo bush, Canada anemone, wild strawberries, wild grapes, cord grass and more. And that's just in the mild zone. Imagine what can be found in the non-mild.

Barney is overseeing the reforestation effort underway on 70 acres of lowlands damaged by the 2011 flood. As part of her management plan, she has been referencing survey maps created in 1875 that indicate a large floodplain forest was once here.

Nearly 43,000 bottomland hardwood trees were planted four years ago and the growth is evident with the sycamores leading the way. In addition to the sycamores, the primary planting included cottonwoods, willows and silver maple, but Barney added a few walnut, pecan, American plum, green ash and dogwood. All of the stock came from the State Forest Nursery.

While planting 43,000 trees on 70 acres seems like a lot, naturally seeded young floodplain forests have several thousand trees per acre, and in the end, nature will determine the survivors.

"We're missing some substantial timber down here," she said. "Anything we can get back, I'm excited about."

Standing in the middle of an emerging bottomland hardwood timber stand, the sounds of pheasants, quail, ducks and geese are joined by redwing blackbirds and dickcissels.

Dragonflies, bumble bees and butterflies move through the area with a sense of purpose. There is little evidence that anyone has been here recently.

### **Watching for invaders**

The flood of 2011 is still causing damage years after its water retreated.

Japanese hops appeared after the flood and has been smothering everything in the floodplain. The exotic invasive can grow up small trees or shrubs and on top of grasses.

“When it grows on everything, treatments must be limited to avoid injuring desirable native plants,” Barney said. “It doesn’t green up early or stay green late like other invasives. The only natural way to suppress it is through shade. That’s why it’s a problem in floodplains. Large cottonwoods die off from flood damage, and the shade is gone.”

Another invader has been around for years.

The tree of heaven. Don’t be misled by the name.

“It’s the worst of the worst,” Barney said. “It’s the ‘checkmate’ for an upland forest. You can have one of those trees in your upland forest and if you miss it and perform routine thinning work, in 10 years, you will be overrun with it. Disturbed ground is its perfect habitat.”

Tree of heaven was brought in from China in the 1800s because it could grow in difficult soils, which made it a good ornamental tree.

It blends in with natives and has features that are similar to a variety of trees and looks nearly identical to the Kentucky coffee tree. It becomes seed producing at age five or six, and can produce 300,000 seeds each. Each seed can have up to a 90 percent germination rate.

Traditional woody plant control treatments don’t work and, in fact, could make things worse.

So far, tree of heaven has not been found at Nettleman Island. Japanese hops was found, but it was spot treated in the planting unit prior to planting.

**Media Contact:** Lindsey Barney, District Forester, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-482-6245 or Pete Hildreth, Southwest Iowa Wildlife District Supervisor, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-254-0955.

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## **Maquoketa River Water Trail dedicated this Saturday**

The Maquoketa River Water Trail, in Delaware County, will be dedicated as Iowa's newest official water trail during a public ceremony at noon on June 16, at the gazebo next to the whitewater park, in downtown Manchester.

Covering 18 river miles, the Maquoketa River Water Trail begins at Backbone State Park, Iowa's first state park, and ends at Bailey's Ford Access. It's the first water trail that includes a whitewater park and a large area of restored river above the Quaker Mill area.

The Maquoketa River Water Trail showcases limestone cliffs, mature oak forests, lowland forests and diverse wildlife. Some stretches provide a quiet, prehistoric feel among ancient rocks and forests. Trail users can slowly float, fish, enjoy a trip through a whitewater park and explore Iowa's oldest state park.

The Maquoketa River can be a moderate paddling challenge on the upper reaches, where paddlers must negotiate riffles, small rapids and strainers.

The water trail dedication ceremony is part of Rhubarb on the River, an annual celebration held in Manchester. Come celebrate Iowa's newest water trail, learn about kayak safety, listen to live music, take part in a bike ride, run a 5K race and enjoy a rhubarb brat.

With the addition of this water trail, Iowa now has 934 miles of state designated water trails.

The Maquoketa River Water Trail was completed through a partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Delaware County Conservation and the City of Manchester.

Media Contact: John Wenck, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Water Trails Coordinator, 515-494-8629.

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## **Popular Village Creek boat ramp on Mississippi River closes August 1**

Lansing - The Village Creek public boat ramp, south of Lansing, previously scheduled to close July 5 will now be closed Aug. 1 through Oct. 31, 2018 for improvements.

Improvements include paving the roadway and boat ramp parking, installing a vault restroom, building sidewalks and adding ramp extensions to improve ramp access during low water conditions.

This is a joint project between Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fisheries and State Parks Bureaus, and the Marine Fuel Tax program.

Alternate Iowa ramps include New Albin Army Road, north of Lansing, and Heytman's Landing, south of Lansing. There are many ramps on the Wisconsin side of the river.

The Big Slough and Winneshiek Slough landings are directly across the Lansing Bridge in Wisconsin. Blackhawk Park area has multiple ramps and Dairyland Power access south of Genoa has plenty of parking.

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## **River Valley OHV Park closed for clean up**

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources continues to focus on clean-up efforts following a fire at the River Valley OHV Park in April, forcing the park to remain closed for a lengthy amount of time.

Although the park may look healthy and green, the park will remain closed for safety reasons for an undetermined amount of time. The DNR is working with contractors and the City of Council Bluffs, as well as others, to move forward with clean-up.

Any unauthorized use of the park is considered trespassing and is a violation of the law.

Media Contact: Michelle Reinig, DNR Parks Supervisor, (515) 250-2222, [Michelle.Reinig@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Michelle.Reinig@dnr.iowa.gov).

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## **Continuous Conservation Reserve Program signup reopens until August 17**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has re-opened the signup window for Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) until Aug. 17, 2018. An estimated 1.3 million acres is available nationally to be enrolled.

Eligible producers and landowners can sign up at their local Farm Services Agency (FSA) office. The FSA will use updated soil rental rates to make annual rental payments, reflecting current values, but will not offer incentive payments as part of this new signup.

The USDA will not offer a general sign up this year, but will offer a one year extension to existing CRP participants with expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less. Eligible producers will receive a letter with more information.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has information on CRP available at [www.iowadnr.gov/crp](http://www.iowadnr.gov/crp).

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828.