



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

## Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 20, 2018

## Severe flooding in northwest Iowa causes multiple wastewater and manure discharges

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SPENCER—Following heavy rains and extensive flooding in northwest Iowa, the DNR encourages Iowans to stay out of floodwaters until after the waters recede.

“About 18 communities from Alton to Sioux Center have reported discharges from their wastewater treatment plants due to intense rains,” said Lois Benson, environmental specialist at DNR’s Spencer field office.

She added that 26 livestock operations reported their manure storage systems were overflowing. “They are reporting they’ve received from 7 to 12 inches of rainfall, with more expected tonight,” she said. “The vast majority have a national pollution prevention discharge elimination system or NPDES permit. In essence, this permit allows them to overflow in heavy rains.”

Most of the discharging livestock facilities are in Lyon, Sioux, O’Brien and Clay counties. “We’re telling them to hold the overflow as best they can and try to prevent it from reaching a stream. Some are transferring it to other areas. Some are trying to contain it behind terraces.”

Producers who expect to discharge need to call the Spencer DNR field office at 712-262-4177.

While fast stream currents are the biggest risk for people, high waters can also carry debris and bacteria. “The safest course is to stay out of the waters until several days after streams return to normal depths,” Benson said.