



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2019

- [Paddlers urged to use caution on two popular river sections](#)
- [State Preserves Advisory Board meets August 7](#)

Paddlers urged to use caution on two popular river sections

Paddlers need to use caution on the Raccoon River in Des Moines and Upper Iowa River in Winneshiek County. Two natural hazards on Iowa rivers are reminders that river users need to stay aware, wear life jackets, and make safe decisions on the water.

“Paddlers and tubers need to recognize that obstructions like this can happen anywhere on a river after a tree falls in,” said Todd Robertson, Iowa DNR River Programs Outreach Coordinator. “We’ve gotten a lot of reports about these two, but it’s natural for rivers to have this type of hazard.”

A popular urban paddling section on the Raccoon River from Walnut Woods State Park to Waterworks Park in Des Moines is causing difficulty for river paddlers and boaters. After leaving Walnut Woods State Park and past the 63rd Street Bridge (Highway 28), the river has cut a new channel to the right. Most of the current is taking paddlers and debris through this new section. The old channel has less water moving through it and will be impassable at currently low water levels. The much narrower newer channel is providing the most current and is the hardest to navigate due to wood debris and scattered strainers.

“We recommend you get out at the river right side and walk around the downed wood,” said Robertson. Downed trees – called “strainers” can flip boats and hold victims under water with fast current. “If we get rains and higher water levels, we recommend using the original channel of the river.”

A large log jam has formed upstream of Chimney Rock Park on a river left outside bend of the Upper Iowa River in Winneshiek County near Decorah. Canoeists and kayakers have flipped and gotten stuck in fast currents through the log jam, leading to the need to be rescued. While the log jam does not block the entire river and can be avoided, a strong current will push a boat toward it. Get out on the river right to be safe and avoid getting sucked into this strainer. For real-time hazard updates and locations or to report new hazards, visit the Iowa DNR’s interactive paddling map at iowadnr.gov/paddlingmap

Learn more about avoiding strainers with this instructional video at <https://www.facebook.com/iowadnr/videos/487274435432969/>

Media Contact: Todd Robertson, Iowa DNR River Programs Outreach Coordinator at 515-243-3714.

State Preserves Advisory Board meets August 7

The State Preserves Advisory Board of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will meet at 9:30 a.m., August 7, at the Pony Creek Nature Center, 56235 Deacon Road, in Pacific Junction.

Prior to the business meeting, field trips are scheduled for 2 p.m. on August 6, at the Sheeder Prairie State Preserve (meet at the preserve entrance) and 8 a.m. on August 7, at the Glenwood Archaeological State Preserve (meet at Foothills Park entrance on Levi Road just south of Hwy 34).

The meeting and field trips are open to the public. Any person attending and has special requirements such as those related to mobility or hearing impairments should contact the DNR or ADA Coordinator at 515-725-8200, Relay Iowa TTY Service 800-735-7942, or Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov, and advise of specific needs.

Members of the State Preserves Advisory Board are Rebecca Kauten, Tony Caligiuri, Amy Crouch, Michael Sullivan, Perry Thostenson and Barbara Schroeder. The Deputy Director of the DNR is Bruce Trautman.

The following is the August 7 agenda.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve minutes of April meeting
- Loess Hills Archaeological Interpretive Center project update
- Proposed goat browsing at Sheeder Prairie State Preserve
- Merritt Forest State Preserve boundary signs
- Heendah Hills letters of support for dedication
- General updates
- Select dates for future meetings

A more detailed agenda is available on the Iowa DNR's website at www.iowadnr.gov/spab.

For more information, contact John Pearson at 515-669-7614.