



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 3, 2019

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Save the date: statewide Volunteer Day is Sept. 28



Iowa State Parks

C E N T E N N I A L

Iowa state parks prepping for 100th Anniversary in 2020

Iowa state parks have set Saturday, Sept. 28 as annual Volunteer Day, when Iowans are invited to lend a hand at more than 40 parks hosting clean-up events.

Volunteer activities will focus on prepping for the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Iowa state park system in 2020. The DNR is working with several organizations to create park improvements and plan activities for the centennial event.

Clean-up efforts will be unique for each park depending on clean-up needs, but may include litter pick-up, staining or painting buildings, planting trees, clearing trails and more. Citizens interested in volunteering can learn more at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/volunteer>.

Odessa hunters should plan ahead for lower water levels this fall

Wapello, Iowa - The water at Lake Odessa will not be raised to normal levels for the 2019 Iowa waterfowl season to allow the area's diverse forest resource to recover after prolonged major flooding by the Mississippi River.

Trees and wetlands shrubs at the Odessa Wildlife Management Area and the adjacent Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge have been increasingly impacted by flooding from the Mississippi River with the most recent flood events beginning in late September 2018 when floodwaters overtopped the emergency spillway and exceeded Odessa's normal fall water level by nearly 12 feet.

Floodwaters remained until the river dropped to normal in December, then returned again in mid-March, inundated the entire Odessa flood protection levee, and lasted for a significant majority of the growing season. The spring flooding was the fourth highest recorded on the Mississippi River at the New Boston gage, and was within 1/10 of one foot from being the third highest. As a result, Odessa reached levels almost 16 feet above normal in early June during this prolonged flood event.

Those back to back major floods are compounding the stress on the trees and shrubs near the wetlands, said Ben Vandermyde, forester with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District.

"Tree roots need to dry out in order to rebuild and repair ahead of the next growing season," Vandermyde said. For now, the trees are doing what they can to reduce the stress on their roots by casting off some of their foliage and while there will likely be some tree mortality; Vandermyde said the extent won't be known until next year.

"If there ever was a time to give the trees and shrubs a break, it's now," said Andy Robbins, wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Water level management at Odessa is important because of the area's reputation as one of Iowa's premier waterfowl hunting locations drawing hunters from all over eastern Iowa and western Illinois. It is also an extremely important stopover point for thousands upon thousands of migratory birds as they make their way through the Mississippi Flyway each spring and fall.

Robbins said that while many areas will still be accessible by boat this season, waterfowl hunters wanting to get back to their normal spots will need to make some adjustments in the way they hunt. "The area will still be huntable, but hunters will need to use small boats or mud motors to get around. The larger boats will have trouble," Robbins said.

In addition to the damage caused to the trees and shrubs, the prolonged high water has prevented the establishment of wild millet, smartweed, sedges, and other waterfowl attracting moist-soil vegetation.

Buttonbush, known locally as buck brush, is a unique and important wetland shrub at Lake Odessa that provides cover and food for duck broods. It is also showing signs of

stress. Keeping water off buttonbush is important for recovery because it's pretty resilient, if given a chance, said Marcie Kapsch, refuge manager at Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Odessa complex is managed in partnership by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and all agree that the decision to not put additional water on the area this fall is in the best interest long term for habitat and wildlife that depends on it.

Meanwhile, the partnering agencies will shift their focus to repairing damaged portions of their respective flood protection levees, including a significant 1,200 foot levee break in the Port Louisa refuge caused by this spring's flood. The DNR is currently planning to lend assistance to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the repair process.

Media Contact: Andy Robbins, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 319-551-8459.

Water pump repaired at Riverton Wildlife Area

Riverton, Iowa - The main pump at the Riverton Wildlife Area began pumping water again to the wetland on Aug. 27, after staff with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Nishnabotna Unit was able to clear the pump intake and get it running.

Riverton is one of Iowa's premier waterfowl hunting areas.

Central Park Lake celebration to highlight lake restoration project

CENTER JUNCTION, Iowa – A celebration of the lake restoration efforts at Central Park in Jones County will be held Sept. 5th, from 5-7:30 pm at the beach at Central Park Lake, located at 12515 Central Park Road, in Center Junction.

A grand opening ceremony and ribbon cutting will be held at 5:30 p.m. to officially celebrate the park's completion of lake restoration activities. The celebration will highlight many of the lake and watershed restoration efforts that have helped improve water quality at Central Park Lake.

The event is free to the public and will feature a variety of environmental and recreational family-friendly activities including: free paddleboat and kayak rentals, a kids casting station, a nature center open house, fishing tackle giveaways, rod/reel checkouts, and educational booths. Families are encouraged to bring their own picnic to the event.

Project partners began meeting in 2012 to develop and execute a comprehensive restoration strategy for the park. Together they developed a watershed management plan and work started in 2013 to improve water quality in the watershed, including

adding 77 new parkland acres and creating two ponds and two wetlands within the watershed to improve water quality in the lake.

The Jones County Conservation Board and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) began in-lake restoration work in 2017, removing over 130,000 cubic yards of excess sediment from the lake, protecting shorelines from erosion, rebuilding boat ramp and parking lot, renovating the beach, and adding informational kiosks and a new accessible fishing pier.

The total investment for watershed and in-lake restoration efforts is \$3.8 million. Project partners include: Jones County Conservation Board, the Iowa DNR, The US Environmental Protection Agency, Wellmark, Parks to People, Grant Wood Loop, REAP, and the Jones County Courthouse.

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Late summer cattail and floating-leaved plant control for ponds

Have the cattails in your pond taken over your favorite fishing spot or crowded you from one side of the dock or swimming area?

Late summer or early fall is the best time to kill cattails, Lotus lily and other emergent or floating-leaved plants that are on the pond's edge or are above the water. Spraying herbicides this time of year will kill the whole plant, and it will not regrow next spring. There is little risk of depleting the oxygen in the pond with treating these plants; they die-back every year at this time and decompose slowly over the coming months.

Starting in late summer, these plants move food to their roots to survive the winter, making systemic herbicides most effective. The most common active ingredient to use is glyphosate (a few brand names with labels for aquatic use include Aqua Neat, Aqua Pro, Aquamaster, GlyphoMate 41, Pond Master, Rodeo, Shore Klear and Touchdown Pro). Find these at local hardware, farm supply or garden stores or try an online search for "aquatic glyphosate."

A surfactant or spreader-sticker must be added to many of these herbicides to help it stick to the plant's leaves. Read the label and check with your local or online retailer to select a surfactant that you can use in ponds. Spray the above-water part of the plant until just wet and follow instructions on the product label.

When you compare product brands, consider the amount of active ingredient, if a surfactant is needed, and size of the container. A product with a higher amount of active ingredient or one that does not need a surfactant added may provide a better value. The convenience of a ready-to-use (RTU) product that you do not have to mix or add a surfactant may outweigh price considerations.

Be careful to:

- Read and follow the product label for application instructions and precautions.
- Spray when calm, or when winds are low and out of a favorable direction to avoid accidentally spraying other plants valuable to landscaping. Increase the droplet size of the spray to reduce drift.
- Spray plants early in the day with full sunlight after the morning dew has dried to get the best results.
- Obey State law. Shoreline owners on public waters may not use herbicides to control aquatic vegetation without a permit. Contact the DNR fisheries office near you for rules and instructions for removing aquatic plants from public waters.

Learn more about aquatic plants in ponds at www.iowadnr.gov/pondplants.

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