



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

## Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2020

- [Public boats ramps and fishing accesses are still open - stay safe and keep physical distance](#)
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## Public boats ramps and fishing accesses are still open - stay safe and keep physical distance

While public boat ramps and fishing accesses are still open across Iowa, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds boaters to abide by the physical distancing protocols recommended by the state to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Boat ramps have been crowded this week with the warm weather. The DNR advises only one boat use a ramp at a time to help prevent contact with other boaters.

A day on the water could provide you with the calm you need right now. Just be sure to follow these recommendations to keep you and your family safe:

1. Keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other boaters and avoid popular areas where people may congregate.
2. Stick with your immediate family, but keep groups to fewer than 10 people.
3. Bring along hand sanitizer.
4. Clean surfaces that others may have touched (e.g boat dock handrails) with wet wipes.

**Media Contact:** Chris Larson, Western Iowa & Missouri River Regional Fisheries Supervisor, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-769-2587.

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## Urban Forestry awards recognize local dedication to trees and outreach

DES MOINES, Iowa – Every year the Urban Forestry Awards luncheon recognizes cities, college campuses and utilities that demonstrate a variety of dedication to the importance of trees in their respective

All awards are presented on behalf of the Arbor Day Foundation and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. This is the 30<sup>th</sup> year for the awards presentations.

The Urban Forestry Award luncheon, originally scheduled for April 2, was cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. A full list of award winners follows.

**Tree City USA Award** – To qualify for the Tree City USA award, a city must have either a city forester or an active city tree board, have a tree ordinance, spend at least \$2 per capita annually for its community forestry program, and have a tree planting and maintenance plan. The 2020 award recipients are below:

- Adel · Glenwood · Odebolt
- Ames · Greene · Oelwein
- Arnolds Park · Grimes · Onawa
- Atlantic · Hampton · Osage
- Badger · Harlan · Oskaloosa
- Bondurant · Hopkinton · Ottumwa
- Boone · Hudson · Parkersburg
- Burlington · Indianola · Red Oak
- Carroll · Iowa City · Rock Rapids
- Cedar Falls · Jefferson · Sioux City
- Clarinda · Keystone · Spencer
- Clarksville · Lisbon · Urbandale
- Clive · Livermore · Washington
- Council Bluffs · Luxemburg · Waterloo
- Cresco · Manchester · Webster City
- Dallas Center · Maquoketa · West Des Moines
- Davenport · Marquette · Westphalia
- Decorah · Muscatine · Westside
- Denison · Nevada · Mt Vernon

- Dubuque · Newton · Pleasant Hill
- Fort Dodge · North Liberty · Winterset

**Tree City USA Growth Award** – To qualify for the Tree City USA Growth award, cities must provide education and public relations, partnerships, planning and management, and tree planting and maintenance in their community. The 2020 award recipients are below (these award winners also are recipients of the Tree City USA award listed above):

- Allison · Glidden
- Bettendorf · Hiawatha
- Cedar Rapids · Marion
- Clinton · Mason City
- Coralville · Polk City
- Des Moines · Story City
- Dysart · Waverly

**Tree Campus USA Award** – To qualify for the Tree Campus USA award, a campus must have a campus Tree Advisory Committee, a tree care plan, a tree program with dedicated annual expenditures, an annual Arbor Day observance, and a service learning project to engage the student body. The 2020 award recipients are below:

- Clarke University
- Drake University
- Iowa State University
- Kirkwood Community College
- University of Iowa

**Tree Line USA Award** – To qualify for the Tree Line USA award, a utility must meet five minimum requirements, including quality tree care, annual worker training, tree planting

and public education, a tree-based energy conservation program, and an annual Arbor Day celebration. The 2020 award recipients are below:

- Alliant Energy
- ITC Midwest
- Mid American Energy
- Waverly Utilities

**Media contact:** Emma Hanigan, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at 515-249-1732.

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## Stay safe and “distance” to start this paddling season

With recent warm temperatures, restless paddlers are ready to put canoes and kayaks in the water. Early spring paddling can provide solitude, exercise and an opportunity to see amazing wildlife, but extra precautions are needed to stay safe.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recommends that paddlers wait for warmer weather to allow the water temperatures to rise slowly. It could be several weeks before water temperatures are ideal and safe as water and air temperatures continue to change.

“Air temperatures may feel warm in early spring, but the water is still dangerously cold and can be deadly to boaters,” said Todd Robertson, Iowa DNR River Programs Water Trails Coordinator. “Cold water shock and hypothermia can set in quickly if you are not dressed and fall into the cold water.”

Stay away from strainers and sweepers—wood or branch piles—deadly hazards that can pull a paddler under or pin them underwater. These are usually found on outside river bends where currents are strongest.

Review these simple safety tips before you head out on the water.

- Check your canoe or kayak for any needed repairs or maintenance after being stored for several months. Look for holes and leaks, make sure all hatch lids fit snug and securely and check your paddle blades for signs of cracking or splitting.
- Wear your lifejacket at all times when underway. Dust off your life jacket and make sure all buckles and zippers work properly and look for holes and tears. Replace the life jacket if it has damage that cannot be repaired. Wear a life jacket at all times while on the water, regardless of your swimming ability. Not only do they help keep your head above water, they help maintain warmth.

- Dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature. Plan as if you were to be in the water at some point because “paddlers are just in between swims.” A wet suit or dry suit is a must. Do not wear cotton clothing—it fails to insulate when wet. Opt for synthetics or wool. Dress in layers so you can peel a layer off if overheated.
- Always bring along a dry bag with a complete set of extra clothes you can change into if you get wet, a first-aid kit and a protected cell phone or weather radio. Get out of wet, cold clothing as soon as possible. Pack plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Let a friend or loved one know where you are going and when you are expected to return. It will be easier to find you if you need help.

While waters remain open to paddlers, social distancing is still required to help slow the spread of COVID-19. The Iowa DNR recommends the following:

1. Limit paddling groups to fewer than 10 people.
2. Keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other paddlers and avoid popular areas where people may congregate.
3. Only touch your own gear.
4. Avoid sharing snacks/water.
5. Bring along a hand sanitizer.
6. Plan your shuttle carefully. Stick with only your immediate family in your vehicle.
7. Explore the Iowa DNR’s interactive paddling map at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking/Where-to-Paddle> to help you plan your paddling trips.

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

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The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is working with state and local officials to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and has transitioned employees to work remotely. DNR offices are closed to the public during this time and only available by appointment.

In other efforts to further reduce the spread of Covid-19, the DNR is encouraging the use of the online services for purchasing licenses, submitting applications, payments and other daily tasks and interaction with DNR staff.

The **FREE Go Outdoors Iowa app** is available at the App store and Google Play. The Go Outdoors Iowa app allows users to purchase and view hunting and fishing licenses and submit harvest and quota reports, all from your cell phone.

**Full list of DNR’s online services:** <https://www.iowadnr.gov/about-dnr/about-dnr/online-services-databases>.

**Up-to-date information on DNR services, facilities and events impacted by Covid-19:** <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Covid-19>.

**Technical information for regulated businesses in regards to Covid-19:**  
<https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Social-Media-Press-Room/Disaster-Assistance#3057321-covid---19-outbreak>.

Thank you for your patience and flexibility during this time. If you need to contact DNR staff you can reach them by email or phone or by calling (515) 725-8200.