



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DNR releases latest draft of 303d impaired waters list

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DES MOINES -- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is seeking public comment on the [newly released draft impaired waters list](#). Data released by the Iowa DNR today shows 99 impairments are recommended to be removed from the 303d impairment list, once approved by the EPA.

This report identifies surface waters that do not fully meet all applicable state water quality standards for their intended use and that need a water quality improvement plan. Of the 1,545 water segments studied, which include portions of rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands, 284 segments fully met the Iowa water quality standards for their intended use, while 489 uses were identified as needing further investigation and 586 segments did not fully meet one or more of the [standards](#) needed for all their intended use and were impaired.

“An increase or decrease in impaired waters does not necessarily mean that the water quality in the state is worsening or improving. It could be a reflection of the additional monitoring we are conducting, changes in water quality standards, and changes in assessment methodologies,” said Roger Bruner, supervisor of the DNR’s Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment section. “Impaired segments are often used for recreation and fishing, among other uses, so impairment doesn’t mean that the segments are unusable.”

[3-Step Process for Impaired Waters Study](#)

The DNR uses fixed station river monitoring, lake monitoring and beach monitoring, wadeable stream biological monitoring, fish tissue monitoring and wetland/shallow lakes monitoring. Several other data are also analyzed before determining whether a water segment does or does not meet the requirements like the Iowa DNR’s Fish Kill Database, along with federal (Army Corps of Engineers and US Geological Survey) and municipal (drinking water supplies) data and surrounding states’ data.

The department’s process is to compile all available credible data in the correct time frame. The data from many different sources are reviewed and assembled into a

standard format. Then, these results are compared to appropriate criteria for each designated use. The final assessment for each segment is a compilation of all these results (2,263 use assessments in this report).

Iowa waters are designated for both aquatic life protection and water contact recreation. Others also may include one or both designations for drinking water or human health protection.

“The DNR has a long history of working with Iowans across the state to help address our water quality challenges,” said Lori McDaniel, DNR Water Quality Bureau Chief. “The importance of this collective, persistent work is clear and will continue to be a priority for the DNR.”

Success stories: Get involved!

To keep the positive momentum moving forward to improve water quality in Iowa, the DNR is encouraging citizens to get involved. The [DNR Watershed Improvement program](#) provides assistance on how to start a water quality effort and seek grant opportunities.

Iowa has several water quality success stories including [watershed improvements](#). To qualify as a success, there must be evidence of water quality improvement that led to a partial or full impairment delisting.

Public comment is welcomed now through December 30, 2020 and should be sent to:

Email: IRcomment@dnr.iowa.gov

Postal mail: Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Attn: Impaired Waters/Segment List
Water Quality Monitoring & Assessment Section
Wallace State Office Building
502 East 9th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

A recorded version of the press conference can be requested by reaching out to Alex.Murphy@dnr.iowa.gov.