



### [Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of December 9](#)

#### December Fishing Podcast

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. You can check the activity of your favorite lake or stretch of river within each district, including which species are being caught, a rating of the bite (slow, fair, good or excellent), as well as a hot bait or lure pattern.

For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

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## NORTHWEST

### [Black Hawk Lake](#)

Most of the lake has been covered in skim ice this last week. If most of the lake is ice-covered this coming week, there are still open water fishing opportunities near the fish house in Town Bay and near the inlet bridge. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Anglers have picked up some fish in the fish house in Town Bay. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Pick up fish in the fish house and near the inlet bridge with a minnow fished under a bobber.

There has been little fishing activity this last week due to skim ice conditions on most of our area water bodies. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

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### Blue Pit

**Rainbow Trout** - Good. Trout were stocked the first week of November. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily bag limit is 5.

Most lakes in northcentral Iowa recently skimmed over with ice. **Unsafe ice conditions** - the ice is too thin for fishing. For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

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### East Okoboji Lake

The lake is fully iced over with a thickness of 3 inches or less; use best ice safety practices if you plan to go out. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair.

### Minnewashta Lake

The panfish and crappie bite is expected to be fairly decent once ice conditions are safe enough to venture out. **Black Crappie** - Fair: A nice crappie bite can be found with a little movement around the lake. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Pumpkinseed** - Fair.

### Scharnberg Pond

Trout were stocked unannounced this fall. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Trout are biting on a variety of different baits. Try a worm or lure that imitates a minnow.

### Silver Lake (Dickinson)

The lake is fully iced up, but conditions are not yet safe enough to venture out on. **Walleye** - Fair.

### Spirit Lake

The lake is fully iced up with 3 or less inches of ice. Practice best ice safety if you try to venture out. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Bluegill** - Fair: Mostly being caught along with perch; use tube jigs with wigglers or pilkies. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

### West Okoboji Lake

There is about 50 percent ice cover across the lake, with better ice within bays. Ice thickness is 3 inches or less; use best ice safety practices if you plan to go out. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Bluegill** - Fair.

Most lakes are fully capped, but ice conditions are very poor. If you plan to try to fish the ice, make sure you have flotation, ice picks and check ice thickness often. The forecast calls for highs in the 20's and 30's with a snowstorm this weekend; a layer of snow will hinder ice production. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

## **NORTHEAST**

### Cedar River (above Nashua)

Impoundments are icing over. Ice depths vary in areas with current. **Unsafe ice conditions**. Anglers are doing well below dams from shore. **Black**

**Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** – Fair: Use minnows under a slip bobber with enough weight to get your bait near the bottom.

### **Decorah District Streams**

Shotgun deer hunting season is here. Many trout streams flow through wildlife management areas where hunting occurs. Use care when fishing a stream; wear bright orange and make noise informing hunters you're present. **Brook Trout** - Good: Walk around cleared areas in stream bottom; these are trout nests or redds. Brook and brown trout eggs will not hatch for a few more months. **Brown Trout** - Good: For brownies slow to take bait, a keen eye and a fly box filled with a variety of sizes and colors makes the difference between catching and taking your pole for a walk. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Plenty of rainbows stay in the stream over the winter. Use hair jigs, spinnerbaits or small shallow water crankbaits for aggressive fish.

### [Lake Hendricks](#)

Few anglers have been out as ice forms. The aerator is on; avoid this area.

### [Lake Meyer](#)

No angling activity. About 1.5 inches of ice with some open water areas.

### [Upper Iowa River \(above Decorah\)](#)

Water clarity is excellent with stable water levels. **Smallmouth Bass** – Good: Try spinnerbaits or jigs tipped with plastics along ledges, seams and eddies. **Walleye** – Good: Find walleye in deeper holes. Use enough weight to get your lure to bottom. Try a jig tipped with a crawler.

### [Volga Lake](#)

Ice forming is forming; **unsafe ice conditions**.

A winter storm watch is in effect in our area for Friday; up to 5 inches of snow possible. Day time temperatures will be above freezing with temperatures below freezing at night. Many waterbodies have skim ice forming; **unsafe ice conditions**. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

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### [Cedar River \(Nashua to La Porte City\)](#)

Anglers are doing well on walleye on the Cedar River, especially later evening and after dark. **Walleye** - Good: Try a jig and plastic tipped with half a crawler or cast crankbaits.

### **Manchester District Streams**

Area Manchester streams remain in excellent condition providing many angling opportunities for rainbow and brown trout.

### [Shell Rock River \(Greene to Shell Rock\)](#)

Anglers are doing well on walleye on the Shell Rock River, especially later evening and after dark. **Walleye** - Good: Try a jig and plastic tipped with half a crawler or cast crankbaits.

### [Wapsipinicon River \(Tripoli to Troy Mills\)](#)

The Wapsipinicon River is producing some walleye opportunities, especially later

evening and after dark. **Walleye** - Good: Use a jig and plastic tipped with half a crawler or cast crankbaits.

Interior river conditions remain favorable providing great angling opportunities. Reports of good walleye fishing on the interior rivers. The ten day forecast does not look favorable for making ice across the state. Call the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER

### Mississippi River Pool 9

Lansing water level is 8.3 feet and is fluctuating. Water temperature is near 33 degrees. **Unsafe ice conditions. Notice: Dredging is completed at Lansing Village Creek.** The west part of the parking lot remains closed. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try a jig and crappie minnow fished in the brush piles and submersed tree tops. **Bluegill** - Fair: Panfish are moving overwintering areas away from the current. Try a small piece of worm under a bobber. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Cast plastics along the weedlines of deep cuts in backwaters protected from the current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Try shad colored baits attached to a leader along backwater weedlines. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has slowed some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Use spinners or crankbaits fished in main channel rock piles along the tips of islands. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has slowed in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch bite has been consistent using a jig tipped with a minnow.

### **Mississippi River Pool 10**

Lynxville water level is 613.5 feet. Water temperature is 35 degrees at the Lynxville dam. **Unsafe ice conditions. Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a jig and crappie minnow fished in the brush piles and submersed tree tops. **Bluegill** - Good: Panfish are moving to overwintering areas away from the current. Use a small piece of worm under a bobber. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Cast plastics along the weedlines of deep cuts in backwaters protected from the current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Try shad colored baits attached to a leader along backwater weedlines. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has slowed some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Smallmouth Bass** - Fair: Use spinners or crankbaits fished in main channel rock piles along the tips of islands. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has slowed in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch bite has been consistent using a jig tipped with a minnow.

### Mississippi River Pool 11

Guttenberg tailwater is 4.9 feet and is expected to fluctuate this week. Water temperature is 32 degrees at the Guttenberg dam. **Unsafe ice conditions. Black Crappie** - Fair: Use a jig and crappie minnow fished in the brush piles and submersed tree tops. **Bluegill** - Good: Panfish are moving to overwintering areas away from the current. Use a small piece of worm under a bobber. **Largemouth Bass** - Fair: Cast

plastics along the weedlines of deep cuts in backwaters protected from the current. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Try shad colored baits attached to a leader along backwater weedlines. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger bite has slowed some in the tailwaters of the dam. Try vertical jigging with an active minnow. **Smallmouth Bass** - Good: Use spinners or crankbaits fished in main channel rock piles along the tips of islands. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye bite has slowed up in the tailwaters of the dams. Use a heavier jig tipped with minnow or three-way rig bounced off the bottom; move often. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch bite has been consistent using a jig tipped with a minnow.

Upper Mississippi River levels have risen slightly this week. Some skim ice is forming; **unsafe ice conditions**. Water temperatures are in the 30's. Warmer weather in the forecast will put a hold on ice formation. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Iowa border of the Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches must be immediately released. One walleye over 27 inches may be kept. Combined walleye/sauger daily limit 6/possession 12.

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### Mississippi River Pool 12

The water level is steady and temperature is in upper 30s. Water levels are 5.0 feet at the Lock and Dam and 7.7 feet at the railroad bridge. Water clarity is good. At these low river levels, be careful not to back off the ends of the boat ramps. Use the minimum water as necessary to launch boats. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills and most panfish are in their winter homes - deeper backwater areas (or harbors) with no current. If not frozen over, they can still be caught on sunny days. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Some bass are continuing to be targeted by select anglers fishing warmer sun soaked backwater areas. Slow chatterbait presentations work best. **Northern Pike** - No Report: Fish gaudy spinnerbaits along weedy edges. Pike get active on warm sun soaked days even in the cold temperatures. **Pumpkinseed** - Fair: Usually found mixed in with bluegills. **Sauger** - Good: Use jigs in tailwater. Most fish reported have been small. **Walleye** - Fair: Most angling for walleye and sauger is taking place in the tailwaters with anglers using jig and minnow or a one-eye jigging spoon. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Expect to see more yellow perch in the creel until ice up. We have had excellent reproduction of yellow perch in the past few years.

### Mississippi River Pool 13

The water level at the Bellevue Lock is steady and is currently near 4.7 feet. Water temperature is in upper 30s in the main channel. Water clarity is good. Levels are still low; be careful not to back off the ends of the boat ramps. Use the minimum water necessary to float boat. A new universally accessible boat loading platform has been built at the Bellevue City ramp; if you fish with someone who has a tough time to get in the boat, consider launching here. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills and most panfish are in their winter homes - deeper backwater areas (or harbors) with no current. If not frozen over, they can still be caught on sunny days. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Some bass are still being caught using a slow chatterbait presentation in backwater areas. The bite is much more aggressive on bright sunny days. **Northern Pike** - Good: Cast a gaudy white spinnerbait in shallow weedy edges. Square bill crankbaits can be deadly for pike

this time of year. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: The kids' trout pond just north of the DNR station has been stocked with rainbow trout for the winter. You can only keep two trout per child. **Walleye** - Good: Most angling for walleye and sauger is taking place in the tailwaters with anglers using jig and minnow or a one-eye jigging spoon. Some very large walleyes were reported this week. **Yellow Perch** - Excellent: Lots of small perch are being seen during fall fish surveys. The future looks bright for decent yellow perch fishing in Pool 13. Most of the fish being caught are small.

#### Mississippi River Pool 14

The water level at the Fulton Lock and Dam is currently steady at 4.8 feet, 9.4 feet at Camanche and 4.3 feet at Le Claire. Water temperature is around 37 degrees in the main channel. Water clarity is good. With the low water, be careful not to back off the ends of the boat ramps. Use the minimum water necessary to float boat. **Bluegill** - Good: Bluegills and most panfish are in their winter homes - deeper backwater areas (or harbors) with no current. If not frozen over, they can still be caught on sunny days. **Largemouth Bass** - Good: Bass have moved into the backwater areas to overwinter. They can still be caught, especially on warmer sunny days. **Pumpkinseed** - No Report: Try the Rock Creek backwaters for this very colorful sunfish species. **Sauger** - Good: Smaller sauger are being reported from the tailwaters mainly on a jig and minnow. **Walleye** - Fair: Most angling for walleye and sauger is taking place in the tailwaters with anglers using jig and minnow or a one-eye jigging spoon. Most fishing occurs at depths greater than 20 feet.

#### Mississippi River Pool 15

The water level at Rock Island is 4.8 feet and is expected to hold steady. The water temperature is near 37 degrees. Water clarity is good. **Sauger** - No Report: Try fishing in the tailwater with a simple jig and minnow. Usually you need to fish at a depth greater than 20 feet for walleye and sauger.

Water temperatures remains in the mid to upper 30's; ice is appearing on the edge of backwater lakes. The water is low and clear, be careful not to back off the ends of ramps. If you have angling questions please call the Bellevue Fisheries Station at 563-880-8781.

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#### Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 4.89 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities feet and is forecast to stay fairly steady. Main channel water temperature is 34 degrees. Backwaters are starting to skim over with some ice; **unsafe ice conditions**. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam and in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or plastics. Fish can also be caught trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the dam or in Sylvan Slough. Some walleyes can also be caught fishing the wing dams. Try vertical jigging with minnows or plastics. Walleyes can also be caught trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

#### Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 3.80 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is forecast to stay



fairly steady. Main channel water temperature is around 34 degrees. Big Timber has some skim ice on it with areas of open water; **unsafe ice conditions**. **Sauger** - Fair: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - Fair: Look for walleyes below the dam. Some walleyes can also be caught on the wing dams. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits.

#### Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 4.03 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is forecast to stay fairly steady. Main channel water temperature is around 39 degrees. Some walleye and saugers have been caught below the dam. **Unsafe ice conditions**. **Sauger** - Fair: Saugers are being caught below the dam. Try fishing with jigs and minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows or stick baits. **Walleye** - Fair: Some walleyes are being caught below the dam. Try vertical jigging minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. Some walleyes can also be caught on the wing dams.

#### Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 1.82 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and has been fairly steady the past few days. Main channel water temperature is around 34 degrees. **Unsafe ice conditions**. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the Lock and Dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows. **Walleye** - No Report: Look for walleyes below the Lock and Dam or on the wing dams. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with minnows.

Tailwater stages have been fairly steady the past few days. Main channel water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is fair. Backwaters have skim ice on them; **unsafe ice conditions**. Some walleye and saugers have been caught below the dams. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

## **SOUTHEAST**

#### Big Hollow Lake

A little skim ice on the south side in the shade; it won't last long. **Bluegill** - Slow: Start looking for bluegill to be out in the deeper water at the edges of the flooded timber where they spend their winter. Use baits and lures similar to what you use for ice fishing.

#### Discovery Park Pond

The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 rainbow trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: They should be use to their new home by now; they like to stay in the corners of the pond.

#### Jefferson Co. Park New Pond

The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 rainbow trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: There was even a few nice brook trout in the mix. By now they have adjusted to their new home; look for them to be stuck tight to the habitat, but in fairly shallow.

### Lake Belva Deer

Water temperature is in the mid-30's. Water clarity is very clear. Very little angler activity. The upper end of the lake is open to hunting. **Bluegill** - Slow: Headed out to their winter homes. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Bass are not very aggressive; try a slow presentation worked along the rocks in 8-10 feet of water.

### Lake Darling

A little skim ice is forming around the edges. That ice won't last long with forecast daytime temperatures in the 50's. Some of the smaller ponds are iced completely, but just barely. **Bluegill** - No Report: Use baits and lures sized for ice fishing in the deep water ice fishing spots.

### Lost Grove Lake

The boat docks at the ramps were pulled on December 1. The gate for the parking lot by the dam is closed for the winter. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Bass are still hanging in 8 to 10 feet of water; expect them to move deeper fairly soon. Slow presentations using jigs or soft plastics work best.

### Wilson Lake

The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 rainbow trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Look for them around the dropped trees and out around the cedar trees sunk in 6 to 8 feet of water.

For more information on the above lakes call the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

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### Lake Macbride

Water temperatures are around 40 degrees. The road to the main boat ramp and beach is closed for a repaving project, but should reopen later this month. The boat docks have been removed for the season, but there is a permanent boat slip at Opie Ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try fishing over stumps/brush with minnows in about 15 feet of water. **Muskellunge** - Fair: Troll large stick baits or cast plastics over deeper structure. **Walleye** - Slow: Jig or troll in 15-25 feet of water during the day or cast to windblown rocky areas at dark.

### Pleasant Creek Lake

Docks are still in and a permanent boat slip is available at Main Ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try fishing around structure in 15 feet of water. **Walleye** - Slow: A few smaller fish have been caught.

### Sand Lake

Trout were stocked in the back section of the lake. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: Try small jigs inline spinners live bait or scented baits.

For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

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### Hawthorn Lake

**Bluegill** - Slow: Target areas around deeper submerged structure and rock piles; use baits that you would use during ice fishing. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Largemouth bass are not very aggressive; try slowing down spinnerbaits or rubber worms along rocky shorelines and fishing jetties.

### Lake Miami

**Bluegill** - Slow: Try small jigs fished around the cedar tree piles; use baits you would use when ice fishing. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Use spinnerbaits and rubber worms fished along the dam and around the fishing jetties. Try slowing down your presentation with the cool water temperatures.

### Lake Sugema

**Bluegill** – Slow: Use small jigs along the shorelines and flooded timber. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Use spinnerbaits and crawdad presentations fished along the fishing jetties and other rocky shorelines.

### Lake Wapello

**Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jigs tipped with a minnow around the cedar tree piles. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs around the submerged structure and cedar tree piles. Vertically jig ice fishing lures. **Largemouth Bass** – Slow: Use a slow presentation; bass are not very aggressive with the colder water temperatures. Try around the cedar tree piles.

### Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

The fall stocking of trout was unannounced; 1000 trout were stocked. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Try spoons, inline spinners or live bait under a bobber.

### Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 905.53 feet msl; 904 feet msl is recreation pool. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels; make sure you properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. Prairie Ridge, Island View and the Bridgeview campgrounds are closed for the season. The ramp is still open at Bridgeview and Island View high water ramp. Docks have been removed for the year. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try jigging around submerged structure or rock piles. **Walleye** - Slow: Try jigging spoons over rock piles.

### Red Haw Lake

**Bluegill** - Slow: Look for submerged structure; these areas should hold fish. Use ice fishing lures over these structures. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: Target areas around submerged structure with a slow presentation. Try rubber worms or other plastics.

Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

### [Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Cast inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Banner Lake \(south\)](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Cast inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Des Moines River \(Stratford to Saylorville Lake\)](#)

**Walleye** - Good: Cast twister tails and swimbaits in deeper water near rock cobble or shale shorelines and substrate. Best bite is near sunset.

### [Lake Petocka](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Cast inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live bait under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Terra Lake](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Good: Cast inline spinners, spoons, small plastics or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Ponds and shallow water in Central Iowa have skim ice. All water will likely be open again by the week of December 13. For information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

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### [Big Lake \(Including Gilbert's Pond\)](#)

**Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Anglers are still catching trout stocked this fall. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

### [Lake Anita](#)

Concentrate fishing in deeper structure.

### [Meadow Lake](#)

Boat anglers can find fish in the cedar tree piles. **Black Crappie** -Fair: Find a deep cedar tree pile and fish minnows under a bobber. Crappie fishing can be good this time of year.

### [Prairie Rose Lake](#)

**Bluegill** - No Report: Look for bluegills around the underwater reefs and cedar tree piles.

### [Viking Lake](#)

Viking Lake is 5.5 feet below full pool. Access is compromised. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Find crappies around deep tree piles.

Very little fishing to report this week due to the weather. For information on lakes in the Southwest District call the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

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