



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Trout stocking in northeast Iowa streams starts April 4

The popular trout stream stocking season starts on April 4. Find a list of stocked trout streams on the DNR trout stream map or the [Iowa trout streams webpage](#).

The DNR Trout Program offers Iowa anglers a variety of trout fishing opportunities, including catchable stockings, fingerling stockings, wild trout, streams with restrictive regulations, easy universal access areas and remote streams with difficult access.

About 320,000 catchable-sized rainbow trout, 30,000 fingerling brook trout, and 5,000 fingerling brown trout will be stocked into hundreds of miles of northeast Iowa streams from the beginning of April through the end of October. Funding to support the trout stocking program comes from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and trout fees. About 40,000 Iowans and 5,000 nonresidents go trout fishing in Iowa each year.

Iowa's trout streams, open year-round, meander through some of the most scenic areas of the state. Get the most out of your trout fishing trip with information about each stream's location, qualities, and other fun facts on the [DNR trout streams webpage](#).

Media Contact: Mike Steuck, Regional Fisheries Supervisor, Northeast Iowa, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-927-3276.

Walnut Woods State Park to offer online reservations for all campsites

WEST DES MOINES –Walnut Woods State Park will become Iowa’s second state park to make all of its campsites available for reservation through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) online reservation system, on April 1.

Most state park campgrounds operate with 75 percent of sites as reservable online, with 25 percent available as walk-in only. The plan to offer 100 percent of campsites available for reservation came after a successful pilot project at Maquoketa Caves State Park, in eastern Iowa, in 2021.

According to park staff, many of those walk-in sites either go unused, or create stressful situations for campers hoping for spots when they arrive at the park. The switch at Maquoketa Caves was met with positive feedback, improved efficiency and an uptick in camping reservations.

“We think campers will appreciate all the benefits of real-time, reservable sites,” said Sherry Arntzen, chief of the Parks, Forests and Preserves Bureau. “Now campers will know exactly what sites are available, helping them to save time and plan their trips.”

Site availability will be known in real-time online, including recent cancellations and online reservations can be made the same day. This is a change from most other state park campgrounds that have a two-day reservation window.

“When we were testing this at Maquoketa Caves, a cancellation would occur and within an hour or two that campsite was reserved,” said Arntzen. “Visitors really appreciated knowing with certainty they would have a site, whether they reserved weeks in advance, or made last-minute plans for the weekend.”

Reservations can be made until 9:00 p.m. the day of arrival by going online at <https://iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com/> or by calling the reservation call center at 1-877-427-2757 Mondays through Fridays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; the call center is closed on Sundays.

A registration building in the Walnut Woods State Park campground will provide online and telephone reservation information for those who come to the park looking for a site. Campers will no longer need to fill out the paper walk-in registration forms or pay with cash or check; all reservations will require a credit card payment online or over the phone. Customers can still pay by check if the reservation is made through the call center and made at least 21 days in advance.

Walnut Woods State Park is located on the southeast edge of the Des Moines metro area and is one of the state’s most popular campgrounds with 22 sites, one of which is a youth group site. Learn more at www.iowadnr.gov/walnutwoods

Ice-out channel catfish are biting

Channel catfish move close to shore and are eager to bite in many lakes and the large reservoirs across Iowa just after the ice is gone. The bite starts sooner in southern Iowa impoundments since they lose ice a week or two before northeast Iowa natural lakes.

After eating light during the winter, channel catfish put the feed bag on in early spring cleaning up small fish that died over the winter. Search for actively feeding fish on windblown shorelines and points where dead fish are piled up and the shallow water warms quickly. Keep the wind in your face and move often until you find actively feeding fish.

Use cut bait or shad sides fished on the bottom. To keep the bait on the hook, try using a 1/0 to 3/0 bait holder hook and enough weight (3/8th to 1/2 ounce) to cast into the wind. Bring along disposable latex gloves to handle the bait and help keep the smell off your hands.

Ice-out catfishing can be good in any lake that has an abundant catfish population. Iowa's flood control reservoirs, Rathbun, Red Rock, Coralville and Saylorville usually offer the best action. Try catfishing in the natural lakes, like Storm Lake, East Okoboji, Little Wall Lake, or Black Hawk Lake in northwest Iowa soon after the ice is gone. Small impoundments, like Don Williams, Big Creek, Volga Lake, Diamond Lake, Greenfield City Reservoir, or Lake Icaria, also offer good early spring catfishing.

Catfish can be found in almost every body of water across Iowa. Check the [weekly fishing report](#) to find out where catfish are biting.

Media Contact: Bryan Hayes, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 712-769-2587.

Spring is a great time for a boating education course

It may not feel like boating season yet, but the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), along with boating safety advocates nationwide, are urging boaters to enroll in a boating education course this spring.

“Education is the key to having a safe and enjoyable day on the water, and spring is the perfect time to take a course before the summer boating season begins,” said Susan Stocker, boating law administrator and education coordinator for the Iowa DNR.

Traditional and online courses are available. Courses are made to fit every schedule and lifestyle. The Iowa DNR has boater education information online at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/things-to-do/boating/boater-education>.

“A boating safety course provides critical boating knowledge and better prepares you for the risks you may face while boating,” Stocker said.

Benefits to taking a boater education course

- Boost your confidence by brushing up on essential boating skills.
- Even if you have already taken a course or are an experienced boater, taking a new course can sharpen your skills.
- A boating safety course can save boaters money. Many boat insurance providers offer discounts to people who have successfully completed a boating safety course.

Iowa boating statistics

- In 2019, there were 22 reported boating incidents on Iowa waters: 14 of those were personal injury; six involved property damage and six resulted in fatalities. Of the six fatalities, two involved alcohol as a contributing factor
- In 2020, there were 39 reported boating incidents on Iowa waters: 16 of those were personal injury; 17 involved property damage, and nine resulted in fatalities. Of the nine fatalities, six involved alcohol as a contributing factor.
- In 2021, there were 33 reported boating incidents on Iowa waters: 26 of those were personal injury; 17 involved property damage, and three resulted in fatalities. None of the fatalities involved alcohol.

Media Contact: Susan Stocker, Boating Law Administrator and Education Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-313-6439.

Results from 2022 state archery tournament

The 2022 Iowa Archery in the Schools Program season culminated with the state tournament March 5-6 at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, where nearly 1,800 archers competed for scholarships and awards in bullseye targets and 660 archers competed for scholarships and awards 3D targets.

State tournament results

Nationals Competition

Male and female archers that placed in the top 10 within their division as individuals, receive a guaranteed spot to participate in one of the national tournaments. Information on nationals qualification can be found at www.naspschools.org under 2022 NASP Tournament Qualification.

Senior Scholarships

Haney Family Foundation Senior Scholarship (Essay Based)

- \$1,000 - Zach Kongable (Center Point Urbana High School)

- \$1,000 - Mason Lind (West Des Moines Valley High School)
- \$1,000 - Hailey Glover (North Scott High School)

Chuck "Coach" Hallier Memorial Senior Scholarship (Essay Based)

- \$1,000 - Benjamin Johnson (Mount Vernon High School)
- \$1,000 -Valerie Beukema (Bondurant-Farrar High School)

3D State Tournament Top Performers

Alise Brockhaus, Lawton-Bronson High School, won the girls 3D competition with a score of 295. Evan Robertson, Springville Secondary School, won the boys 3D competition with a score of 292. Both archers received a \$1,500 scholarship and a custom Gen-X Bow package. Erin Strohman, Spencer High School, was the girls 3D runner-up with a score of 289. Heber Blackmore, Springville Secondary School, was the boys 3D runner-up with a score of 290. Both runner-up archers received a \$1,000 scholarship.

Bullseye State Tournament Top Performers

Alise Brockhaus, Lawton-Bronson High School, won the girls bullseye competition with a score of 295. Timm Chandonia, South Tama County Middle School, won the bullseye competition with a score of 295. Both archers received a \$1,500 scholarship. Kailee Jacobs, Springville Secondary School, was the girls bullseye runner-up with a score of 293. Mason Lind, Valley High School, was the boys runner-up with a score of 294. Both runner-up archers received a \$1,000 scholarship.

High All-Around (3D/Bullseye Combined State Tournament Scores)

Alise Brockhaus, Lawton-Bronson Jr/Sr High School, was the female high all-around champion with a total combined score of 590.

Evan Robertson, Springville Secondary School, was the male high all-around champion with a total combined score of 581.

Both archers received a \$1,250 scholarship.

3D All-State Team (Highest League Score Combined with State Tournament Score)

Girls All-State

- Alise Brockhaus – Lawton-Bronson Jr/Sr High School (Captain)
- Erin Strohman – Spencer High School
- Eastyn Petersen – West Fork High School
- Taylor Butterwegge – Valley High School
- Payton Bellings – Bellevue High School

- Mackenzie Baustian – Prairie High School

Boys All-State

- Heber Blackmore – Springville Secondary School (Captain)
- Cooper Jipsen – Atlantic High School
- Alexander Shover – Anamosa High School
- Jacob Sarazin – Alburnett Middle School
- Timm Chandonia – South Tama County Middle School
- Zander Meister – Lawton-Bronson Jr/High School

Bullseye All-State Team (Highest League Score Combined with State Tournament Score)

Girls All-State

- Erin Strohman (Spencer High School) (Captain)
- Kailee Jacobs (Springville Secondary)
- Taylor Butterwegge (Valley High School)
- Alise Brockhaus (Lawton-Bronson Jr/Sr High School)
- Sidney Fondell (Bellevue High School)
- Emry Schmudlach (Jesup Middle School)

Boys All-State

- Cooper Jipson (Atlantic High School) (Captain)
- Timm Chandonia (South Tama County Middle School)
- Mason Lind (Valley High School)
- Conner Johnson (Atlantic High School)
- Cael Post (Independence Jr/Sr High School)
- Ty Harding (Westwood School – Sloan)

Complete Tournament Results

Bullseye: <https://nasptournaments.org/tournamentdetail.aspx?tid=8335>

3D: <https://nasptournaments.org/tournamentdetail.aspx?tid=8551>

State Archery Tournament Participation

1,786 bullseye archers representing 121 Iowa schools.

658 3D archers representing 81 schools.

The state tournament was sponsored by the Iowa Bowhunters Association, Ducks Unlimited, Whitetails Unlimited, Safari Club International, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Media Contact: Zach Benttine, Archery Education and Outreach Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-205-8709.

Red Haw State Park remains closed due to tornado damage

CHARITON – Red Haw State Park remains closed to visitors following the March 5 tornado through the park. The campground, which is the most heavily damaged area of the park, is anticipated to be closed until Labor Day.

Cleanup continues, with progress dependent on the weather. Visitors will not be allowed into the park for safety reasons and are asked to stay away at this time. Volunteer days to help with cleanup will be announced at a later date once major hazards are removed and the ground has dried out.

For future updates, visit the DNR's Alerts and Closure page: www.iowadnr.gov/parkclosures

Project AWARE cleanup to take on the West Fork of the Des Moines River Water Trail

Volunteers have the opportunity to spend their summer vacation cleaning up, learning about and exploring 61 miles of the West Fork of the Des Moines River from Petersburg, Minn., to near West Bend, Iowa, from July 10 to 15.

Project AWARE, which stands for A Watershed Awareness River Expedition, is the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' annual volunteer river cleanup event. In addition to removing trash from the river, participants learn about watersheds, water quality, recycling, and other natural resource topics. This expedition marks Project AWARE's 18th year.

"We are excited to be a part of this year's project," says Penny Clayton with the City of Estherville, "Not only will the cleanup directly benefit our local river ecosystem, improve water quality and increase recreational potential, the event also heightens awareness to the community and bring volunteers together to work on this worthwhile effort."

Volunteers participate by paddling down the river in canoes and cleaning up river trash along the way. Opportunities for land-based volunteers are also available. While the expedition lasts five days, volunteers may stay and help for as little or as long as they like. Project AWARE is family-friendly and provides the opportunity to experience a different river each year.

Iowa Project AWARE provides a unique opportunity for Iowans to actively improve the quality of our rivers. Since 2003, nearly 3,000 volunteers have removed more than 459 tons of trash from rivers all around Iowa; 78 percent of the garbage has been recycled.

In previous years, a creative-thinking volunteer used the proceeds from the scrap metal to stock the river with walleye fingerlings.

From personal experience, longtime volunteer Sara Mildenstein reflects, "I am always astonished by the different things we find in the river each summer. Cars, tractor tires (highly coveted), bowling pins, bags full of gym clothes lost during someone's camping trip. What's funnier than the trash we find is the efforts of Iowa Project AWARE volunteers to get it out."

In addition to river cleanup, Project AWARE also offers a unique blend of educational programs and demonstrations, volunteer camaraderie, camping and other outdoor recreation opportunities that enrich the experience. This year's volunteers will paddle the entire length of the newly-dedicated West Fork of the Des Moines River Water Trail in Emmet County.

For more information about Iowa Project AWARE, or to register as a river cleanup volunteer visit www.iowaprojectaware.org.