



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EcoNewsWire

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Water Summary Update: Near-average April rains help drought conditions improve

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DES MOINES — Precipitation for April averaged 3.20 inches, about a half inch below normal. The near-normal rainfall helped to continue improvement of drought conditions in Iowa, according to the latest Water Summary Update.

However, at the start of May, more than half of Iowa is free from dryness or drought. Concern, however, continues for water resources in parts of northwest Iowa.

"April was close to normal for rain, and for the year to date the state is only about a half inch below normal," said Tim Hall, DNR's coordinator of hydrology resources. "However, some areas of northwest and western Iowa received two inches below normal rain for the month, and that is of concern. If we can get above normal rainfall in May and June, we should see continued improvement."

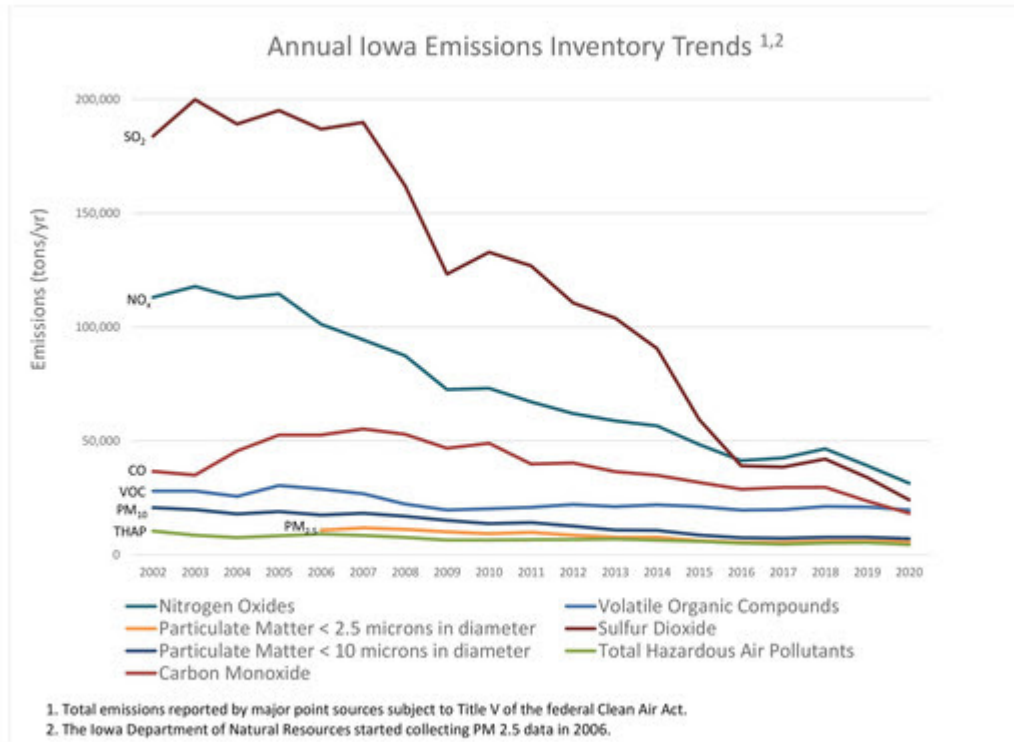
Soil moisture and groundwater levels are near normal across much of Iowa, but northwest Iowa remains drier.

For a thorough review of Iowa's water resource trends, go to www.iowadnr.gov/watersummaryupdate.

The report is prepared by technical staff from Iowa DNR, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, IIHR—Hydroscience and Engineering, and the U.S. Geological Survey, in collaboration with Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department.

Emissions are down—Get outdoors to enjoy improved air

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It's spring. That time of year when temperatures warm, mushrooms pop up and the outdoors beckons.

So run. Hike or bike. Hunt for mushrooms. Take photos. Visit our parks. And count on better air quality. Over the last 18 years, Iowa industries have significantly reduced six major air pollutants, along with total hazardous air pollutants, while growing our economy.

“Air quality has improved dramatically,” said Kayla Lyon, DNR director. “Iowa industries have stepped up—replacing aging equipment with newer, better technologies and processes. Their efforts have paid off to help Iowans breathe easier.”

Air pollutants are down, according to Iowa DNR's [emissions inventories](#). Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide have decreased the most—down by nearly 90 and more than 70 percent. For example, sulfur dioxide decreased from 183,780 tons in 2002 to 24,083 tons in 2020.

DNR is looking out for Iowans' health. The annual emissions inventory tallies reports from facilities that emit pollutants. Tracking air pollutants helps DNR ensure Iowa companies comply with pollution regulations designed to protect public health and the environment.

Predictive modeling and two types of monitoring also help [DNR evaluate air quality](#). Computer modeling predicts the quantity of pollutants in the air we breathe. The models forecast how pollutants spread out from a source. This tool helps DNR determine if pollution from industrial facilities will meet federal standards. DNR also monitors air quality. At the source, emissions monitoring shows if an industrial facility meets specific pollutant limits included in its air permits. In our communities, air monitors collect and evaluate pollutants in the air we breathe.

Air pollution can make breathing difficult, harm people's respiratory systems or trigger asthma and other illnesses. Modeling and monitoring air pollution helps protect Iowans.

If you want to dig into the data, emission reports, and modeling and monitoring data are available on the [air quality webpages](#). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency summarizes long-term [air quality data](#) across the U.S. And, just published, the American Lung Association's [State of the Air report](#) shows Iowa has clean air. Find out more about air quality trends in Iowa and [your neighborhood](#). Or, explore a few ways you can [help keep Iowa's air healthy](#).

Air quality awareness week is May 2 – 6.

DNR to kick off waste sorts across state to learn more about landfill diversion goals

MEDIA CONTACT: Tom Anderson, DNR, tom.anderson@dnr.iowa.gov or 515-240-6059.

DES MOINES – Over the next 12 weeks, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will conduct waste sorts across the state to learn more about how Iowans recycle and use their local landfills.

Beginning May 12, SCS Engineers will begin the 2022 Statewide Waste Characterization Study for the DNR by collecting, hand-sorting and categorizing multiple samples of residential and commercial sector waste from 10 municipal solid waste landfills of varying sizes from across the state. SCS will also perform visual sorts of construction and demolition loads for the 2022 study.

“We’ll take the data from the 2022 study and compare it to previous studies to help us identify trends and see how we’re meeting state and local landfill diversion goals,” said Tom Anderson with the DNR’s Land Quality Bureau. “Overall, it will help us increase waste diversion program efficiencies and improve quality of life for Iowans.”

Data resulting from the study is also important in supporting the DNR’s [sustainable materials management initiative](#), currently underway.

DNR enforcement actions

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DES MOINES – DNR staff work with individuals, businesses and communities to help them protect our natural resources by complying with state and federal laws. This approach is very effective. In the few cases where compliance cannot be achieved, the DNR issues enforcement actions. The following list summarizes recent enforcement actions. Find the entire, original orders on DNR’s website at www.iowadnr.gov/EnforcementActions.

Consent Orders

A consent order is issued as an alternative to issuing an administrative order. A consent order indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

Polk County

Southeast Polk Community School District

Comply with all terms of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, including the stormwater pollution prevention plan; hire qualified personnel to inspect disturbed areas of the construction site; and pay a \$6,000 administrative penalty.

Air Quality permits under review

**MEDIA CONTACT: Sarah Piziali, DNR, at 515-725-9549
or Sarah.Piziali@dnr.iowa.gov for construction permits.**

DES MOINES – The DNR Air Quality Bureau has the following draft permits up for review. The permits help protect Iowans’ health and air quality. DNR’s permitting staff review each permit application to ensure facilities comply with state and federal air quality requirements. We encourage public comments on draft permits, providing help on how to [make effective comments](#). Submit written comments to the assigned permit writer before 4:30 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. DNR considers public comments before finalizing the permits.

Construction Permits

DNR engineers review and issue construction permits to facilities before they build new or modify existing sources of air pollution. The public may review the following air quality construction permits available online at www.iowadnr.gov/airpermitsearch OR through the [EASY Air Public Inquiry Portal](#) and then click the Public Notice tab.

Louisa County

MidAmerican Energy Company—Louisa Station—8602 172nd St., Muscatine.

Project No. 22-166. This company is an electricity generating utility. The permit modification is for three coal handling units. This project replaces the control equipment on the three units. The public comment period ends June 6. A virtual public hearing will be held from 9-11 a.m. on June 6.