



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 24, 2022**

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## Visitors expected to fill state parks over Memorial Day weekend

Iowa state parks and forests are gearing up for a busy Memorial Day weekend, the traditional start of the outdoor summer recreation season.

“Park visitors are excited to get outside and enjoy the beautiful weather after a long winter inside,” said Sherry Arntzen, chief of the DNR’s State Parks, Forests and Preserves Bureau. “Our parks offer a variety of activities for all enthusiasts from hiking the trails to picnicking, fishing and swimming. There’s something for everyone while enjoying the outdoors.”

Campers are urged to plan ahead when visiting Iowa state parks and forests for Memorial Day weekend. Most electrical and full hookup sites in busy parks are already reserved, so campers may want to consider non-electric sites or at “hidden gem” parks a little further away from home. Additionally, Iowa state parks and forests offer around 1,200 non-reservable sites available on a first-come, first-served basis, with most people choosing to stay Thursday through the weekend.

To find site availability and make a reservation, go to <https://iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com/> For an up-to-date list of park and trail closures due to renovations or weather-related alerts, visit: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Places-to-Go/State-Parks/Alerts-and-Closures>

Park visitors can help take care of the parks by cleaning up trash after themselves, and carrying out what they brought in. Please park vehicles in designated parking lots and not along roadways. If visiting beaches, be aware that most swimming areas do not have a lifeguard on duty, and pets must be kept off beaches and be on a leash.

“We hope that campers enjoy their time and make memories while staying in our parks and recreational areas, and do so safely and return again,” Arntzen said.

### Tips

- Keep track of the weather and have a plan in case of severe weather
- Pack bug spray, sun screen and a basic first-aid kit
- Check the registration kiosk for activities in the area
- Don't burn trash
- Don't bring fireworks
- Be a good neighbor. Observe quiet hours and pick up after yourself

**Media Contact:** Sherry Arntzen, DNR Parks Bureau Chief, 515-346-7036, [Sherry.Arntzen@dnr.iowa](mailto:Sherry.Arntzen@dnr.iowa).

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## Help protect Iowa's forests - leave firewood at home

Memorial Day weekend and throughout the summer, thousands of Iowa will be camping and building campfires. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages campers to buy firewood from where they will burn it instead of bringing it from home.

“Moving unseasoned firewood around the state can threaten the health of our forests by spreading insects like emerald ash borer (EAB) that live in firewood,” explains Tivon Feeley, DNR Forest Health forester.

EAB is a small, metallic-green, invasive wood-boring beetle native to east Asia that attacks and kills ash trees. It attacks trees of any size, age, or stage of health.

The spread of EAB into uninfected areas has been primarily through people moving firewood from county to county or state to state. “These pests don't move far on their own, but they can travel hundreds of miles in a single day in contaminated firewood,” said Feeley.

Plenty of firewood is available locally near state and county parks. Simply ask a park ranger or campground host for local firewood availability. Make sure to burn all of the firewood at the campsite and not leave it or transport to a new area.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship requires all firewood sold or acquired in Iowa to have the county and state of harvest location on the label of packages and the delivery ticket for bulk firewood.

Find more information about emerald ash borer and the reasons not move firewood online at [www.iowadnr.gov/eab](http://www.iowadnr.gov/eab).

**Media Contact:** Tivon Feeley, Forest Health Forester, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-669-1402.

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## Boaters in Western Iowa urged to use caution due to low water conditions

Water levels in oxbow lakes adjacent to the Missouri River are lower than normal going into the summer due to consecutive years of abnormally dry conditions in western Iowa and historic low flows in the Missouri River this past winter. Access to these lakes may be compromised.

Carter Lake (Pottawattamie County), a popular recreational boating lake in the Omaha/Council Bluffs metro area, is three feet below crest. Lake Manawa is in better condition because it can divert water from nearby Mosquito Creek. Its water level has been down between one and two feet all spring. Affected lakes include Blue Lake (Monona County), DeSoto Bend (Harrison County), Snyder Bend (Woodbury County), Browns Lake (Woodbury County), and a host of smaller borrow lakes along the Interstate 29 corridor.

“These oxbow lakes have a hydrologic connection with the Missouri River,” explains Bryan Hayes, Iowa DNR fisheries biologist. “There is a lag time between when river levels are restored and water levels in these oxbow lakes. Trying to predict when water levels will return to normal is difficult.”

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

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## Paddle Iowa Waters. Catch Fish. Win Prizes.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is excited to launch a new digital passport modeled after the successful State Park Passport created in 2020 to mark the 100th anniversary of Iowa State Parks

The new Hook n’ Paddle Passport encourages Iowans to explore easy and safe paddling spots, catch fish, stay active and get up close with nature this summer.

Starting June 1, travelers can sign up online and win prizes for checking in to one or more of 50 easy local fishing and paddling locations across Iowa. The more locations visited, the more prizes available. Prizes include:

- The first 500 people to check into three locations will win an exclusive Hook n’ Paddle Passport sticker.
- The first 100 people to check into 10 locations will win a stocked mini tackle box.
- Every check-in is an entry into monthly (June-August) and end of season sweepstakes with a grand prize of a kayak, paddle, life jacket and dry bag.

Sign up for the Hook n’ Paddle Passport and get tips for a fun kayak fishing adventure at [www.iowadnr.gov/kayakfishing](http://www.iowadnr.gov/kayakfishing).

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## Get hooked on fishing during free fishing weekend June 3-5

Iowa residents can try fishing without buying a license on June 3, 4 and 5 as part of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) free fishing weekend. All other regulations remain in place.

"A summer of family fun is just a short drive and a fishing pole away," said Joe Larscheid, chief of the Iowa DNR's Fisheries Bureau. "You'll be reeling in fish and making new memories in no time!"

Free fishing weekend is a great time to learn how to fish, take your family fishing, or introduce a friend to fishing. Outdoor fun awaits at hundreds of Iowa lakes, thousands of miles of rivers or a neighborhood pond.

Find a list of stocked lakes and ponds that are easily accessible in parks and along trails on the Iowa DNR's interactive Iowa Community Fisheries Atlas at [www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fish-Local](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fish-Local).

Fun, hands-on fishing events will be offered across Iowa to help families new to fishing get started. Check the general fishing calendar on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/fishing](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fishing) for a list of free fishing events.

Keep the fun going all summer long by buying a fishing license. It's easy to buy a fishing license with the DNR Go Outdoors Iowa online licensing system at <https://license.gooutdoorsiowa.com/Licensing/CustomLookup.aspx>. You can download the public Go Outdoors IA mobile app for iPhone and Android devices to buy and store your fishing license, so you will always have access to your license no matter where you are. Yearly, seven-day, or 24-hour fishing licenses are available.

Enticing a fish to bite your hook is fun for all ages. Get tips for taking kids fishing and catching crappie and bluegills on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Ready-to-Fish](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Ready-to-Fish).

**Media Contact:** Tyler Stubbs, Community Fishing Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-344-6960.

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## Iowa's Scholastic Clay Target Program crowns International Skeet and International Bunker Trap champions

The Scholastic Clay Target Program held championship events for International Skeet and International Bunker Trap the past two weekends. These events are the same as what are competed in at the Olympics.

International Skeet was held May 14-15 at the New Pioneer Gun Club, in Waukee, while the International Bunker Trap Championship was held on May 21 at the AVAD Hunt Club, near Coon Rapids.

In the International Skeet competition, Logan Burxvoort, from the Pella Shooters Club, won the men's non-collegiate division, while Matthew Brindley, from William Penn, won the men's collegiate division. Megan Vos, from the Oskaloosa Shooting team, won the women's non-collegiate division.

At the International Bunker Trap Championship, it was a repeat performance for brother and sister Cole and Lexi Henning, from Wilton, who won the men's non-collegiate and ladies non-collegiate, respectively. Sam Gannon, from Iowa Central, won the men's collegiate division. Athletes from both events were invited to the National Junior Olympic Match in Hillsdale, Mich., in July.

The final results from both events are below.

### **International Skeet Championship**

#### Men's Individual

1. Logan Bruxvoort, Pella Shooters Club: 87
2. Carson Simon, Oskaloosa Shooting Team: 78
3. Tyler Tucker, Indianola Youth Trap Team: 71

#### Women's Individual

1. Megan Vos, Oskaloosa Shooting Team: 66
2. Madalynn Schroeder, Pella Shooters Club: 58
3. Haley Starmer, Pella Shooters Club: 49

#### Men's Collegiate Individual

1. Mathew Brindley, William Penn Shotgun Sports: 116

#### International Skeet Team Standings

1. Pella Shooters Club: 194

### **International Bunker Trap Championship**

#### Men's Individual

1. Cole Henning, Wilton Trap Team: 108
2. Dylan Johnson, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports: 94
3. Jackson Woebke, Carroll County Shooting Sports: 92

#### Women's Individual

1. Lexi Henning, Wilton Trap Team: 95

#### Men's Collegiate Individual

1. Sam Gannon, Iowa Central Community College: 105
2. Breydon Paxson, Simpson College: 104

## International Bunker Trap Team Standings

1. Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports: 274
2. Carroll County Shooting Sports: 234

The Scholastic Clay Target Program is the largest, fastest growing, and most exciting youth clay target program in the country. Student athletes from elementary through high school and college have the opportunity to compete in sports such as trap, skeet, and sporting clays, as well as Olympic disciplines like bunker trap and international skeet.

Up next is the American Trap Championships, June 7- 12, at the Iowa State Trapshooting Association Homegrounds, near Cedar Falls.

The SCTP is a youth development program, first and foremost and we do this through the shooting sports and competitive shooting. The SCTP's mission is to help kids reach their highest potential. For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target Program in Iowa, contact Chris Van Gorp, DNR Shooting Sports coordinator, at 515-313-8048 or [chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov).

**Media Contact:** Chris Van Gorp, DNR Shooting Sports Coordinator, (515) 313-8048 or [Chris.Vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Chris.Vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov).

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## June is Invasive Species Awareness Month

In an effort to increase awareness of invasive species and the impact they have on Iowa's ecosystems and economy, Governor Kim Reynolds recently proclaimed June as Invasive Species Awareness Month in Iowa.

Each year, public and private organizations spend millions of dollars in an effort to control invasive plants, insects, diseases and animal species in Iowa's woodlands and urban areas.

Invasive species, such as emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, spongy moth and oriental bittersweet threaten Iowa's ecosystem by competing with and destroying native trees and disrupting the natural complex habitat system.

Iowa woodlands, wildlands and waterways draw hundreds of thousands of tourists and recreational users each year. Raising awareness of invasive species and their impacts is an important step towards behavior change, which can prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

Invasive Species Awareness Month provides an opportunity for government agencies, businesses, industries, conservation and recreation groups, and community organizations to join forces, and take action against the introduction and spread of invasive species in Iowa.

Learn more about forest invasive species on the DNR website at [www.iowadnr.gov/invasives](http://www.iowadnr.gov/invasives).

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## Iowa DNR Fire Program gearing up for national wildfires

AMES – As wildfires start to rage in parts of the west, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fire Program has been busy getting firefighters from Iowa ready to be dispatched to wildfires across the country.

The Iowa DNR Fire Program recently completed financial and qualification paperwork for 34 firefighters from Iowa for the U.S. Forest Service Administratively Determined Casual/Emergency Hire Firefighter program. These firefighters can be dispatched through the Missouri Iowa Coordination Center out of Rolla, Mo., to wildfires and other national incidents like hurricanes, floods and tornadoes.

Wildfires are starting to spread across the desert southwest and parts of California and Texas. Several resources from the Missouri dispatch center have been deployed to New Mexico to a large wildfire.

“The national wildland fire season seems to get earlier and earlier each year,” explains Ryan Schlater, fire specialist, with the Iowa DNR’s Fire Program. “We used to talk about a national wildland fire season starting in mid-July and going into early September. We now refer to them as fire years, with Iowa firefighters being deployed as early as May and as late as December to fires and other all risk, natural disasters.”

The Iowa DNR Fire Program sends out firefighters on 20 person hand crews, type 3 and 6 fire engines, and as single resource positions such as Emergency Medical Technicians. The program has been sending wildland firefighters to national incidents since 2006.

For more information, contact Ryan Schlater at 515-233-8067 or visit the Iowa DNR Fire Program webpage at [www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Fire-Management](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Fire-Management).