



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Wastewater News

Environmental Services

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Federal Clean Water Act Celebrates 50 Year Anniversary

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The Clean Water Act, created and passed in response to a nationwide movement advocating for the improvement and restoration of the country's waters, is celebrating 50 years October 18, 2022.

Passed in 1972, the Clean Water Act made it a priority to prevent water pollution and clean up industrial and municipal sewage. The act regulated the disposal of wastes and provided funding for communities to build sewage treatment plants with grants.

Through the Clean Water Act, wastewater standards were established and other pollution control programs were implemented that, along with the dedication of states, communities and industries to improve the quality of water sources, have made a significant difference in the health of communities and waterways.

Before the Act, some waters in Iowa were so hazardous that they were deadly to fish. The Cedar River had levels of E. Coli and other bacteria hundreds of times the modern limit. Polluted waters that caused eye and skin infections made fishing and recreation dangerous.

Today, Iowa's wastewater treatment facilities are continually improving to meet modern standards. Since 2011, more than 115 Iowa communities have constructed wastewater treatment technologies that now remove more than 1 million pounds of ammonia annually from more than [41 billion gallons of wastewater](#). Additionally, 191 communities constructed technology that disinfects 86 billion gallons of effluent annually to reduce bacteria in waterways. That means a cleaner environment for fish and a safer experience for Iowans to swim, fish and boat in rivers and lakes.

The wastewater infrastructure in Iowa and across the country is impressive, and expensive to build and maintain. One way the Iowa Department of Resources, in partnership with the Iowa Finance Authority, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and local communities, supports these significant community investments is with the [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#). The fund supports wastewater treatment, sewer rehabilitation and stormwater quality improvements, as well as several other water quality improvement projects. Loans are available for publicly owned treatment facilities for construction projects, planning and design costs.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund program also offers public and private entities and landowners affordable financing for a variety of water quality projects. Since 1990, the Iowa CWSRF has provided over \$3 billion in cumulative assistance to meet Iowa's wastewater, stormwater and sewer needs.

The DNR's Watershed Improvement Program, focused on how drainage from land affects water sources, has funded nearly 630 local, regional and statewide clean water projects since 1990. Local staff work with landowners and officials to track improvements in water quality, and its projects in Iowa have totaled \$113 million through implementation of Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

To learn more about Iowa water quality programs go to: www.iowadnr.gov/waterquality. To learn more of national Clean Water Act success stories, visit the Association of Clean Water Operators website at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7d0f08ced7114279a76ac501d30ef3b7>.

Upcoming Wastewater Conferences and Training

Please see the links below for more information on upcoming wastewater conferences.

- **October 26, 2022 - Iowa Water Environment Association Region 5 Fall Meeting**
 - The IAWEA Region IV Fall meeting will be held at the Indianola wastewater treatment facility at 10939 Grimes Street in Indianola.
 - [Conference Brochure and Registration](#)
- **October 25-27, 2022 - Iowa American Water Works Association Annual Conference**
 - The AWWA-IA Annual Conference will be at the Hyatt Regency in Coralville.
 - [AWWA Annual Conference website](#)
- **December 6-8, 2022 - Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities 28th Annual Water/Wastewater Operators Training Workshop**
 - The Operators Training Workshop will be held at the Meadows Event Center at Prairie Meadows in Altoona.
 - [Event Website](#)

Operator Certification: Continuing Education Opportunities

Online and virtual training opportunities are being created and offered through community colleges, state industry associations, national industry associations, EPA, and other state industry partners. All operators should continue to monitor their emails and the Training Calendar on the [Iowa DNR Operator Certification Database](#). Look at the calendar often, as there are new opportunities posted throughout the week.

Please contact Laurie Sharp at (515) 725-0284 with any questions concerning operator certification training.