



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 17, 2023

- [Fall community trout stocking starts October 21](#)
- [Iowa's youth enjoy special pheasant season Oct. 21-22](#)
- [Consistent watering essential for new trees this fall](#)
- [Trout coming to RAPP Park in Shenandoah this Saturday](#)
- [More than \\$3 million in REAP grants approved during October Natural Resource Commission meeting](#)
- [Iowa DNR to host open house on Lake Keomah improvement plans](#)

Fall community trout stocking starts October 21

Eighteen lakes across Iowa are gearing up to receive trout this fall. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will release between 1,000 to 2,000 rainbow trout at each location as part of its cool weather trout program that brings trout to areas that cannot support them during the summer months.

“Grab your neighbors, friends and kids and try trout fishing this fall,” said Joe Larscheid, chief of the Iowa DNR Fisheries Bureau. “It’s time well spent. The fish are here, easy to catch and good to eat.”

The fall community trout stockings are a great place to take kids to catch their first fish. A small hook with a night crawler or corn under a small bobber or small simple spinners such as a Panther Martin or Mepps is all you need to get in on the fun.

Bringing trout to cities and towns offers a “close to home” option for Iowans who might not travel to northeast Iowa to discover trout fishing. A family friendly event is often paired with the stocking to help anglers have success and fun while fishing. Check the [Iowa DNR Trout Fishing website](#) to see which lakes are having events.

The popular program is supported by the sales of the trout fee. Anglers need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10.

Children age 15 or younger can fish for trout with a properly licensed adult, but they must limit their catch to one daily limit. The child can purchase a trout fee which will allow them to catch their own limit.

2023 Fall Community Trout Stocking Schedule

Oct. 21, [Marr Park Pond](#), Ainsworth, 1 p.m.
Oct. 21, [Emma Young Pond](#), Clinton, 10 a.m.
Oct. 21, [Lake of the Hills](#), Davenport, 10 a.m.
Oct. 26, [Ottumwa Park Pond](#), Ottumwa, 11:00 a.m.
Oct. 27, [Prairie Park Fishery](#), Cedar Rapids, 10 a.m.
Oct. 27, [Liberty Centre Pond](#), North Liberty, 10:30 a.m.
Nov. 1, [Moorland Pond](#), Fort Dodge, Noon
Nov. 1, [Big Lake](#), Council Bluffs, 3 p.m.
Nov. 2, [North Prairie Lake](#), Cedar Falls, 11:30 a.m.
Nov. 2, [Heritage Pond](#), Dubuque, 11:00 a.m.
Nov. 3, [Sand Lake](#), Marshalltown, 12:30 p.m.
Nov. 3, [Terra Lake](#), Johnston, Noon
Nov. 6, [Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#), Ames, Noon
Nov. 8, [Scharnberg Pond](#), Spencer, Noon
Nov. 9, [Bacon Creek](#), Sioux City, 1:30 p.m.
Nov. 9, [Lake Petocka](#), Bondurant, Noon
Nov. 17, [Triumph Park West](#), Waukee Noon
Nov. 22, [Blue Pit](#), Mason City, 11 a.m.

Find more information about trout fishing in community lakes on the [DNR trout fishing webpage](#).

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

Iowa's youth enjoy special pheasant season Oct. 21-22

Iowa's young hunters will get to experience the first cackle and flush of the year during the youth only pheasant season, Oct. 21-22.

The residents-only youth season gives Iowans age 15 and younger the opportunity to hunt for rooster pheasants without purchasing a license, habitat fee or taking hunter education. Each youth must hunt under direct supervision of an adult age 18 or older that has a valid hunting license and habitat fee.

The 2023 August pheasant population survey had the highest statewide counts since 2015, with the biggest increases coming from southwest, northwest and northeast regions. The statewide average was nearly 23 birds per route; a 15 percent increase over 2022.

“We haven’t had too many years since 2012 that areas were considered excellent, but there are some swaths of counties listed as excellent in northwest and north central Iowa – and over half of the state is considered fair to excellent,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife research biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

“And with the advanced crop harvest we’re seeing across much of the state, this would be a great time to spend a weekend in the field passing along our pheasant hunting tradition to the next generation.”

Special youth only seasons allows young hunters an opportunity for success without pressure or competition from other hunters. Only the youth are allowed shoot pheasants and they may bag one rooster per day. Shooting hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tips for a Safe Hunt

- Iowa law requires hunters to wear at least one of the following articles of visible, external apparel with at least 50 percent of its surface area solid blaze orange: hat, cap, vest, coat, jacket, sweatshirt, shirt or coveralls.
- Hunters should stay in communication with each other and to stay in a straight line while pushing a field.
- Discuss the hunting plan that spells out how the hunt will take place, each person’s role in the hunt and where each person will be at all times.
- Know exactly where standers will be located, especially when hunting standing corn or tall switch grass to avoid having the standers get shot by the pushers as they near the end of the field and the birds begin to flush.
- Make sure to unload the gun when crossing a fence or other obstacle to avoid it accidentally discharging.
- Properly identify the target and what is beyond it especially if hunting in fields that still have standing corn.
- If hunting with a dog, never lay a loaded gun against a fence. Hunting dogs are usually excited to be in the field and could knock the gun over causing it to discharge.
- Share the hunt. Take someone new along to help keep Iowa’s great hunting tradition alive.

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-979-0828.

Consistent watering essential for new trees this fall

Fall is usually a good time to plant trees with mild temperatures and adequate ground moisture. With drought conditions across Iowa this fall, watering newly planted trees on a regular schedule through the 2024 growing season is essential for a strong start and healthy life.

Shade trees can reduce heating and cooling costs, improve the air we breathe, add beauty and color to backyards, provide shelter from the wind and sun, and make our communities a better place to live.

A properly planted and maintained tree will grow faster and live longer than one that is incorrectly planted.

“Properly planted trees will have a better opportunity for a long, healthy life,” said Iowa DNR district forester Mark Vitosh. “Improperly planted trees can become stressed more easily or may look otherwise healthy, but then suddenly die in the first 10 to 20 years after planting.”

Follow these simple tips to properly plant and maintain a healthy tree:

- Select a species that matches your site’s growing conditions (i.e. soil type, soil drainage, available growing space, full sun or shade, etc.).
- Always call Iowa One Call-811 before you start digging to locate any underground utilities.
- Remove top soil from the original root ball until you can see the first lateral root. This first main root should be just below soil grade when planting.
- Measure the distance just above the first lateral root to the bottom of the root ball; that is the depth that you should dig the planting hole. Proper planting depth is key to long-term tree survival. If the hole is dug too deep the tree can settle over time which can cause long-term health issues.
- Once the tree is planted, slowly water the planting hole (focus water in the location of the root ball) to settle the soil. As the tree grows, water the expanding root system further away from the initial root ball.

In the first year or two after planting, timely watering and mulching can be critical for success. Once a tree is well established, structural pruning can help maintain a quality tree into the future.

Find more tips and a video on how to properly plant a tree and proper tree care after planting on the DNR webpage at www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Urban-Forestry.

Media Contact: Emma Hanigan, Urban Forestry Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-249-1732.

Trout coming to RAPP Park in Shenandoah this Saturday

SHENANDOAH - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is partnering with Optimal Aquafeed and Page County Conservation Board to stock rainbow trout at 9 a.m. this Saturday, October 21 in RAPP Park, outside Shenandoah.

Approximately 750 rainbow trout ranging from 0.75 lbs to 4.0 lbs. from Optimal Aquafeed will be stocked by Iowa DNR staff in a small borrow pit on the RAPP Park property. A second stocking of approximately 500 rainbow trout is planned for November.

Anglers must have a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10.

Children age 15 or younger can fish for trout with a properly licensed adult, but they must limit their catch to one daily limit. The child can buy a trout fee which will allow them to catch their own limit of five trout.

This is the third year of this successful partnership that provides a unique fishing opportunity to southwest Iowa anglers.

Media Contact: Andy Jansen, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-464-3108.

More than \$3 million in REAP grants approved during October Natural Resource Commission meeting

The Natural Resource Commission of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources approved 22 Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grants during its October meeting. The grants totaled more than \$3 million.

Established in 1989, the Resource Enhancement and Protection program has funded nearly \$389 million for city, county and state park projects that have included water quality improvements, habitat protection, roadside prairies, historical development and conservation education.

The following grants were approved at the Oct. 12 meeting.

REAP City Parks & Open Spaces

Small Cities Category

- City of Hills, Songbird Sanctuary Park - \$50,000
- City of Winthrop, Winthrop City Park Enhancement - \$50,000
- City of Dunlap, Pleasant View Trailhead and Park Improvements - \$75,000
- City of Springville, Emmons Park Phase Three Expansion - \$75,000
- City of Conrad, Conrad South Main Trail Extension - \$35,054

Medium Cities Category

- City of Lisbon, Pleasant Grove Heritage Park Prairie Reconstruction - \$11,900
- City of Perry, Frog Creek Campground Land Acquisition - \$100,000
- City of Fairfield, Pleasant Lake Habitat Restoration - \$71,903
- City of Monticello, Monticello Hwy 151 Trail Expansion Phase I - \$75,000
- City of Grimes, Wallace Farm Park - \$125,000
- City of Milford, Clay County Connection Phase II - \$75,000
- City of Eldora, Memorial Park Trail Connecting the Iowa River Valley - \$75,000
- City of Polk City, Connecting the Neal Smith Trail to the High Trestle Trail - \$100,000
- City of Fort Madison, Connecting Fort Madison Phase IV 48th Street Connector - \$50,326

Large Cities Category

- City of West Des Moines Parks & Recreation, Raccoon River Greenway 1st Street River Access - \$200,000
- City of Des Moines, Gray's Lake Park Paddle Craft Marina Development - \$300,000
- City of Iowa City, Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens - \$200,000
- City of Urbandale, Walnut Creek Regional Park - \$150,000
- City of Ottumwa, Trail Connector into Ottumwa Park - \$81,176

REAP County Conservation Boards

- Pottawattamie County Conservation Board, Hitchcock Nature Center Addition - \$450,000
- Dickinson County Conservation Board, Little Sioux Savanna Addition - \$300,000

Private Public Cost-Share

- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, McCoy Wildlife Management Area Addition - \$240,000
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Sweet Marsh Wildlife Management Area Addition - \$172,875

To learn more about REAP, consider attending a local REAP assembly. REAP assemblies are held across the state every two years, and are a great opportunity for local citizens to learn more about REAP, work with like-minded citizens who are also interested in natural resource work, and share ideas on how REAP can work better for your county or community.

Attendees have the chance to identify opportunities for regional projects, and review and recommend changes in policies, programs and funding. Dates, location and time for the 10 remaining assemblies in October are available at www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/REAP/REAP-Public-Participation/REAP-Regional-Assemblies.

Delegates elected from each region during the fall assemblies will attend the statewide REAP Congress in January 2024, in Des Moines. Regional priorities will be voted on by the entire REAP Congress and sent to the Governor and legislature. Through this process, Iowans help preserve Iowa's rich and diverse natural environment for generations.

Check out www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/REAP/Projects-by-County to discover REAP projects across Iowa. For more information about REAP, go to www.iowadnr.gov/reap

Iowa DNR to host open house on Lake Keomah improvement plans

OSKALOOSA -- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting an open house to discuss renovation and improvement plans for Lake Keomah State Park, from 5:30 – 8 p.m. on Nov. 1, at the Lake Keomah Lodge. The public is invited to attend.

The DNR will share plans for a lake restoration project at Lake Keomah to improve water quality and recreational opportunities. Construction is tentatively scheduled to start fall 2024 and continue into spring 2026. Planned improvements include additional watershed practices to protect the lake, stabilizing the shoreline, dredging in targeted areas, upgrading the boat ramp and trail, and improving fish habitat.

The address for the state park is 2720 Keomah Lane, Oskaloosa.

DNR Contact: Chad Malone, Park Manager, (641) 673-6975
or Lake_Keomah@dnr.iowa.gov