



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 21, 2024**

- [Visitors expected to fill parks over Memorial Day weekend](#)
- [Expect heavy boat traffic on Iowa waters for Memorial Day Weekend](#)
- [Share the fun of fishing during free fishing weekend June 7-9](#)
- [Iowa DNR seeking chronic wasting disease ambassadors in southern Iowa](#)
- [Help protect Iowa's forests - Leave firewood at home](#)
- [Iowa DNR fire program gearing up for national wildfires](#)
- [Trap, sporting clays, and skeet championship preview](#)
- [Iowa's Scholastic Clay Target Program crowns international skeet and international bunker trap champions](#)

## Visitors expected to fill 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 950 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, Parks, Forest and Preserves Bureau Chief, 515-346-7036, [Sherry.Arntzen@dnr.iowa](mailto:Sherry.Arntzen@dnr.iowa).

---

## Expect heavy boat traffic on Iowa waters for Memorial Day Weekend

The Memorial Day weekend marking the unofficial beginning to Iowa's boating season is days away and boaters across the state are busy preparing their watercraft for the holiday.

Susan Stocker, boating law administrator and education coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, said Memorial Day weekend is often the first time on the water for many boaters and they should take time to review Iowa boating laws and plan to have patience at the ramp and on the water.

"Recent heavy rain across the state will reduce water clarity and add flood debris to the rivers and larger reservoirs. Boaters will need to use caution and watch for obstacles, including debris floating just under the surface," she said. "Regardless of the weather forecast, it will be busy on the water."

One way boaters can stay on the water is by inspecting their vessels prior to heading to the lake.

"There are a few simple things boaters can do to have a safe weekend on the water and topping that list is to have a designated boat operator who abstains from alcohol," she said. "Operators will also need to watch their speed and be on the lookout for others."

She said boaters should make sure lifejackets are in good condition and the right size for each person onboard. Check the fire extinguisher, boat and trailer lights, whistle, and throwable floatation.

Boaters are reminded about the requirement that drain plugs and other water draining devices must be removed and/or remain open during transport to avoid spreading invasive species. Anglers leaving with fish are recommended to put them on ice, whether in a cooler, a bucket or a live well (plug must still be removed and/or opened).

Operators can brush up on rules and regulations, by taking the DNR boating safety course. Iowa law requires any person 12-17 years old, who will operate a motorboat over ten horsepower or a personal watercraft, to successfully complete the education program. It is available online at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Boating/Boater-Education>. Stocker reminds everyone on board that they need a properly fitted lifejacket. Safety officials also urge you to wear it.

"It is similar to seat belts on the road. You won't have time to grab it and put it on, when facing an emergency situation," she said.

Iowa has more than 211,000 registered boats.

### **Boating safety Tips**

- Alcohol and boating don't mix. Wind, sun, glare and heat can enhance the effects of alcohol hindering the operator's ability to make decisions.
- Check for open ramps or water hazards before heading out.
- Before leaving the house, check the trailer lights, wheel bearings and the hitch.
- Make sure there is a current fire extinguisher and horn/whistle, a wearable life jacket for everyone and a USCG approved throwable device onboard.
- File a float plan with a friend, including your destination, expected time of return and type of boat.
- Wear your lifejacket - it floats, you don't.
- Inflatable lifejackets are light weight, comfortable and USCG approved. Wear it.
- Take a boater education course. It has valuable information and many insurance companies will offer a discount on boat insurance.
- Top two safety violations in Iowa are having inadequate life jackets and operating too fast and too close to other vessels.

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

---

## **Share the fun of fishing during free fishing weekend June 7-9**

Iowa residents can try fishing without buying a license on June 7, 8 and 9 as part of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) free fishing weekend. All other regulations remain in place.

Free fishing weekend is a great time to share the fun of fishing with a kid, your family or a friend. Outdoor fun awaits at hundreds of Iowa lakes, thousands of miles of rivers or a neighborhood pond.

"Grab your tackle box, take the family, and get your lines in the water," said Joe Larscheid, chief of the Iowa DNR's Fisheries Bureau. "You'll be reeling in fish and making new memories in no time!"

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.

---

## Iowa DNR seeking chronic wasting disease ambassadors in southern Iowa

Chronic Wasting Disease Ambassadors is a collaborative education program between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach that seeks to help Iowans address the challenge of chronic wasting disease. Hunters, landowners, and conservationists interested in learning more about chronic wasting disease are encouraged to attend a course offering June 11, 18, and 25 at the Rathbun Fish Hatchery, in Appanoose County.

The course will cover best practices for preventing spread of the disease, how to collect tissue samples for testing, and how to educate others within their community, all in an effort to better educate Iowans on how to manage a healthy deer herd and slow the spread of the disease. The goal of the program is to develop a small, connected, and well-educated network of local leaders to effectively communicate about the management and mitigation of chronic wasting disease.

“Partnerships are key to the effective management of chronic wasting disease,” said Tyler Harms, biometrician for the Iowa DNR and co-organizer of the course. “We need hunters, landowners, and interested conservationists working together to slow the spread of this disease.”

The course includes three in-person meetings from 6-9 p.m. and two online lessons completed between the in-person sessions. In-person sessions will include instruction and hands-on exercises related to the ecology of chronic wasting disease, sampling for the disease, and effective communication strategies. Participants will also have the opportunity to network with area wildlife biologists. Graduates of the course will be given resources to help spread the word regarding effective chronic wasting disease management in their communities.

Registration is available at [https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ebL4dhDJanzAbFs](https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ebL4dhDJanzAbFs) or by contacting course facilitator, Adam Janke, at [ajanke@iastate.edu](mailto:ajanke@iastate.edu) or 515-294-7429 and is open until the week before the course starts, or until the class is filled (25

participants). There is no cost to participate. A light meal and refreshments will be served at each of the three sessions.

Chronic wasting disease is always fatal to deer and has been found in wild deer in 23 Iowa counties. To learn more about the disease and its management in Iowa, including ways to help slow the spread of the disease, go to [www.iowadnr.gov/cwd](http://www.iowadnr.gov/cwd).

---

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

Thousands of Iowans will be camping and building campfires this Memorial Day weekend and throughout the summer. 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), oak wilt, and other pests that live in firewood," explains Tivon Feeley, DNR Forest Health Forester.

Plenty of firewood is available locally to your favorite state or county park. Ask a park ranger or campground host where you can get local firewood. Make sure you burn all of your firewood at your 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.

Learn more about the importance of using local or certified heat-treated firewood at [www.dontmovefirewood.org/](http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/).

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

---

## Iowa DNR fire program gearing up for national wildfires

AMES – After sending three different type 6 engine crews to Texas in late March and April, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fire Program has been busy getting firefighters from Iowa dispatched to wildfires across the country.

The Iowa DNR Fire Program recently completed financial and qualification paperwork for 44 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.

Some early season wildfires were occurring in Texas, but the western wildfire season looks to be a late start.

“The 2024 national wildland fire season looks to be less active than in past years,” explains Ryan Schlater, fire specialist, with the Iowa DNR’s Fire Program. “Our predictive services personnel from our federal partners don’t have any predictions past July yet, but June looks to be active for northern Minnesota and the desert southwest.”

The Iowa DNR Fire Program sends out firefighters on 20 person hand crews, fire engines of varying tank and pump sizes, 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).

---

## Trap, sporting clays, and skeet championship preview

Iowa’s youth shooting sports athletes are preparing for several upcoming state championship events. More than 3,300 Iowa shooting sports athletes will participate in the 2024 Iowa Scholastic Clay Target Program Championship Events held throughout June.

The trap shooting event will be held at the Iowa State Trapshooting Association Homegrounds, north of Cedar Falls, from June 3-9. Athletes from grade school through high school will compete in American Singles, Doubles, and Handicap Trap, shooting over 820,000 targets.

- June 3-4: Elementary and Middle School Trap Singles
- June 5: Handicap Event, all ages
- June 6: Doubles Trap Event
- June 7-9: High School Trap Singles

The sporting clays championship will be held June 13-15 at the Black Oak Clays shooting range, near Pella. The final competition will be American Skeet, held June 20-23, at the New Pioneer Gun Club, in Waukee.

The Scholastic Clay Target Program has seen constant growth in participation in Iowa middle school and high school teams, from 1,400 athletes in 2011, to more than 4,500 athletes today.

“The Scholastic Clay Target Program provides opportunities for all Iowa students regardless of size, strength or speed - it really is a level playing field,” said Marty Eby, interim coordinator of the Scholastic Clay Target and Scholastic Action Shooting Programs for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “All athletes are welcome to attend and compete at the state championship events. The shooting sports are as much a competition against yourself as it is with other competitors, and we have many athletes shoot their personal best at these events.”

The Scholastic Clay Target Program and Scholastic Action Shooting Program are youth development programs that promote shooting sports and competitive shooting as a means to help young individuals achieve their highest potential and become their best selves. The program's goal is to instill personal values and character traits, such as fair play, compassionate understanding, individual responsibility, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and personal commitment in young people.

For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target or Action Shooting Programs in Iowa, contact Marty Eby at 515-313-8048 or [Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov).

**Media Contact: Marty Eby, (515) 313-8048 or [Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov).**

---

## 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 on May 18-19. These events are the same as what are competed in at the Olympics. International Skeet was held at the New Pioneer Gun Club, while the International Bunker Trap Championship was held at the AVAD Hunt Club, near Coon Rapids.

In the International Skeet competition, Owen McConville, 5<sup>th</sup>, from the Des Moines Clay Crushers won the men's non-collegiate division and Madalynn Schroder from Pella Shooters Club, Inc., won the women's non-collegiate division. Final results are below.

At the International Bunker Trap Championship, Gavin Wulf and Lexi Henning, from Wilton Trap Team, won the men's non-collegiate and ladies non-collegiate respectively. Cole Henning, from Wilton Trap Team/William Penn University, won the men's collegiate division. Upon completion of the events, athletes from both events were invited to the National Junior Olympic Match in Hillsdale, Mich., in July. The final results are below.

### International Skeet Championship

#### Men's Individual

1. Owen McConville 5th, Des Moines Clay Crushers: 81
2. Dunkin Guillen, Pella Shooters Club, Inc.: 76
3. Joshua Van Donselaar, Oskaloosa Shooting Team: 67

#### Women's Individual

1. Madalynn Schroeder, Pella Shooters Club, Inc.: 108
2. Megan Vos, Oskaloosa Shooting Team: 87
3. Lauren Harmon, Ankeny Centennial Jaguars Shooting Sports: 50

#### International Skeet Team Standings

1. Oskaloosa Shooting Team: 221
2. Pella Shooters Club, Inc.: 184

3. Des Moines Clay Crushers: 177

### **International Bunker Trap Championship**

#### Men's Individual

1. Gavin Wulf, Wilton Trap Team: 92
2. Nathan Nepple, Carroll County Shooting Sports: 91
3. Nolan Kent, Williamsburg Shooting Sports: 84

#### Women's Individual

1. Lexi Henning, Wilton Trap Team: 93
2. Laylah Wehner, Williamsburg Shooting Sports: 59
3. Leni Wulf, Wilton Trap Team: 56

#### Men's Collegiate Individual

1. Cole Henning, Wilton Trap Team/William Penn Shotgun Sports: 113

#### International Bunker Trap Team Standings

1. Williamsburg Shooting Sports: 243
2. Carroll County Shooting Sports: 243
3. Wilton Trap Team: 241

The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) allows student athletes from elementary through high school and college the opportunity to compete in sports such as trap, skeet, and sporting clays, as well as Olympic disciplines like bunker trap and international skeet. The next championship competition is the Doubles Skeet Championships taking place May 25 at the Mahaska County Izaak Walton League near Oskaloosa.

The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP) are youth development programs that promote shooting sports and competitive shooting as a means to help young individuals achieve their highest potential and become their best selves. The program's goal is to instill personal values and character traits, such as fair play, compassionate understanding, individual responsibility, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and personal commitment in young people.

For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target or Action Shooting Programs in Iowa, contact Marty Eby, at 515-313-8048 or [Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Marty.Eby@dnr.iowa.gov).