

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2024

Flooding causes wastewater bypasses, unsafe waterways and closes parks

STATEWIDE -- Following heavy rainfall throughout Northern Iowa, the DNR encourages Iowans to stay out of streams until the waters recede. Heavy rain has inundated several areas of Iowa and led to multiple wastewater discharges, flooded waterways in northwest Iowa, and park closures across the state.

Wastewater and Drinking Water

The DNR Field Office in Spencer was notified early this morning of several wastewater bypasses and animal feeding operation discharges in Lyon, Sioux, Dickinson, O'Brien, Osceola, and Clay counties. Currently, the department is unaware of impacts to municipal drinking water supplies or fish kills. DNR staff will continue to monitor these situations and assist impacted communities.

Heavy rainfall can overload wastewater collection systems and underground sewer pipes carrying sewage to a treatment plant. With sewage pipes overwhelmed, excess water has nowhere to go and can back up into basements through floor drains. Bypassing can lower the water level and alleviate pressure in the collection system, keeping sewage from backing up into basements, which could present health risks.

State Park Impacts

In the Iowa Great Lakes area, some docks, boat ramps, public beaches, and roads are underwater and may be closed over the next several days due to changing conditions and potential hazards.

George Wyth State Park, in Waterloo, will close Monday at 3:00 pm due to predicted levels of the Cedar River. The park will remain closed through Friday, depending on additional rainfall.

Dolliver State Park, near Lehigh, the Des Moines River is expected to crest at 15 feet during the next few days, which will close the road through the park.

Wilson Island Recreation Area in Pottawattamie County is predicted to be flooded by the rising Missouri River later in the week.

Campers who have made a reservation will be notified if there is a campground closure. More areas may be impacted with additional rainfall. Plan ahead and visit the DNR's Alerts and Closures web page for the latest information: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Places-to-Go/State-Parks/Alerts-and-Closures>

Rivers and Lakes

Due to heavy rainfall, rivers and lakes in Northern Iowa are unsafe for swimming or boating. Fast currents, floating debris, hidden obstacles, and the potential of bacteria make these areas dangerous. Boaters and paddlers should plan ahead as additional areas may become unsafe as flood waters move downstream.