

- ## Joint project supports threatened turtle species, while tracking juvenile movements



All but five of the hatchlings have been outfitted with a small transmitter. This summer, Iowa State University student techs will be recording their positions daily while the transmitters last, which is roughly two months. To learn more about the Blanding's turtles project, go to the [DNR's YouTube channel](#).

"We don't have much data on Blanding's turtles, and practically no data on juveniles, so this opportunity will provide important information on these hatchlings' movements," said Dr. Karen Kinkead, with the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program

Blanding's turtles are a threatened species in Iowa and are being considered for federal listing. Information collected on hatchlings movements and preferred habitat may help to guide habitat management.

These medium sized turtles are only found in certain locations in Iowa, preferring a mix of clean, shallow, and slow-moving water associated with ponds, wetlands, shallow lakes and sloughs with aquatic vegetation. Due to habitat compression resulting in nesting closer together, the population is also impacted by nest raiders, like opossums, raccoons, chipmunks and other animals, and, after hatching and as small juveniles, by mammals, large wading birds and other predators.

"In the wild, just hatching means these turtles beat the odds. Leaving the nest and finding the wetland is another major achievement, and making it to year one is like winning the lottery. Which makes today all the more exciting," said Kayla Lyon, director of the Iowa DNR.

"Restoring wetlands and shallow lakes has been a department priority for decades. Working with our partners to improve habitat on public lands as well as members of the agriculture community who are willing and interested in installing and improving habitat on private land, is critical if we are to maintain our wildlife populations and we want to thank our partners for their efforts. It takes a lot of work to get to this point and takes a lot of work to maintain it, and this effort is being repeated all across the Prairie Pothole region of Northcentral and Northwest Iowa."

Restoring these wetlands and shallow lakes benefits Blanding's turtles in addition to many other wildlife species, including nesting trumpeter swans and sandhill cranes, along with numerous grassland birds and waterfowl.

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## Public meeting to discuss ongoing drought conditions at Blue Lake

ONAWA – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will host a public meeting at 5:30 p.m., June 26, at the Onawa Community Center, 320 10th Street, to discuss Blue Lake low water levels.

Extended drought conditions continue to impact water levels at Blue Lake, located within Lewis and Clark State Park. The lake level is about five feet below crest elevation, which will impact recreation on the lake this summer.

Iowa DNR staff will share the results of more than 15 years of water level studies, findings from the 2010 diagnostic and feasibility study for the restoration of Blue Lake, and current water level management strategies.

Blue Lake, like many other oxbow lakes, is characterized by a small watershed drainage area relative to the size of the lake and a localized water recharge area. Oxbow lakes form when a curve (or meander) in a river finds a shorter path, effectively isolating the old curve, forming an oxbow lake in a low-lying plain near the side of the river. Water levels in these lakes are highly influenced by nearby river and groundwater levels, especially during periods of flood or drought.

Sitting about 11 feet above the Missouri River, Blue Lake is especially sensitive to long periods of low water in the river, as groundwater near the lake seeps downhill towards the river. Water levels in the Missouri River have been especially low over the past five winters, contributing to lower than normal groundwater levels.

Any person with special requirements such as those related to mobility or hearing impairments who wishes to participate in the public meeting should promptly contact the DNR or ADA Coordinator at 515-725-8200, Relay Iowa TTY Service 800-735-7942, or [Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov) to advise of specific needs.

### For More Information:

Ben Wallace - Fisheries Biologist. Email: [ben.wallace@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:ben.wallace@dnr.iowa.gov); Phone: 712-661-9655

Michelle Balmer - Lake Restoration Program Coordinator.  
Email: [michelle.balmer@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:michelle.balmer@dnr.iowa.gov); Phone: 515-238-2458

Nathan Fylstra - Park Manager, Lewis and Clark State Park.  
Email: [nathan.fylstra@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:nathan.fylstra@dnr.iowa.gov); Phone: 712-431-6761

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## Help stop the spread of invasive species in your community

Invasive species, like 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. Much of the spread of invasive species comes from people simply enjoying nature. Uninvited guests can hitch a ride on outdoor gear, shoes and clothes, traveling hundreds of miles in a single day.

Take these easy steps to stop the spread of invasive species in your community.

- Verify that the plants you buy for your yard or garden are not invasive. Many non-native plants can become invasive. Find quick ID photos and common management techniques to control 19 invasive trees, shrubs and plants on the DNR webpage at [iowadnr.gov/programs-services/forestry-resources/forest-tree-health/invasive-plants](http://iowadnr.gov/programs-services/forestry-resources/forest-tree-health/invasive-plants)
- Look for spongy moth egg masses on all outdoor equipment when traveling from a spongy moth quarantined area.
- Clean your boots before and after you hike in a new area to avoid spreading seeds. This is a common way garlic mustard and other plants are spread.
- Do not buy or sell firewood from outside your county. Firewood can contain emerald ash borer, Sirex woodwasp, Asian longhorned beetle, oak wilt and many more pests. Plenty of firewood is available locally near state and county parks. Make sure to burn all of the firewood at the campsite and not leave it or transport to a new area.
- Work with your private lands district forester for plans to make your forests more resilient to invasive species. Find contact information and forest landowner assistance resources online at [iowadnr.gov/programs-services/forestry-resources/forestry-landowner-assistance](http://iowadnr.gov/programs-services/forestry-resources/forestry-landowner-assistance).

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

**Media Contact:** Tivon Feeley, Forest Health Program Leader, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-669-1402 or [tivon.feeley@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:tivon.feeley@dnr.iowa.gov).

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## Fishing regulations to be relaxed at Cold Springs Lake

LEWIS - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will relax the fishing regulations at Cold Springs Lake starting June 15 to allow anglers to more freely harvest fish before the lake is chemically renovated as part of a plan to improve the quality of angling for years to come.

Anglers with a valid fishing license may harvest any size or number of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, crappie, channel catfish, and all other fish species from Cold Springs Lake. Any number of fishing poles or jug fishing will be allowed. Anglers must remain in sight of these lines at all times, and follow all other fishing regulations and area rules. Trot lines will be allowed (name and address must be attached), however lines may not be set across the entire water body. Nets, dynamite, poison, electric shocking devices, or any stupefying substances will not be allowed. It is illegal to sell fish or stock captured fish into public waters.

Relaxed fishing regulations for Cold Springs Lake will remain in effect until August 1. Anglers may fish anywhere within the lake. DNR fisheries staff will collect game fish from the lake in mid-summer and relocate them to other lakes in the area.

The DNR will lower the lake water level starting August 1 to prepare for the renovation project aimed to improve the poor size structure of largemouth bass and bluegill and increase near-shore habitat. Fish data collected each year for the past 10 years shows poor bass health with no bass over the legal length limit. Bluegill data shows low catch rates of quality fish.

The fishery renovation is only part of a process to improve the lake's fish population. Construction of in-lake fish habitat, primarily pea gravel spawning beds, will be built while water levels are down.

This project will continue through spring 2026. Starting August 1, lake users should expect limited access to the lake until water levels return to normal.

**For more information contact Southwest Iowa DNR Fisheries at 712-250-0010.**

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## Natural Resource Commission to hold its June 12 meeting virtually

Des Moines, Iowa – The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will hold its monthly meeting virtually on June 12, beginning at 9:30 a.m. The meeting is open to the public.

The meeting will originate from 6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200, in Des Moines. The public may participate remotely either by video conference at <https://meet.google.com/sco-mbns-qya> or phone by dialing 442-242-3609 a few minutes before the meeting begins. When prompted, enter the pin 883 789 392 followed by the # key.

Members of the NRC are Tom Prickett, Uriah Hansen, Tammi Kircher, KR Buck, Laura Kudej, Bill Moritz, and Collin Brecher. The director of the DNR is Kayla Lyon.

Any person participating in the public meeting and has special requirements such as those related to mobility or hearing impairments should contact the DNR or ADA Coordinator at 515-725-8200, Relay Iowa TTY Service 800-735-7942, or [Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov), and advise of specific needs.

The following is the agenda for the June 12 meeting.

- Approval of Agenda
- Consent Agenda (\*within agenda indicates proposed consent agenda item)
  - \*Donations
  - \*Larson Logging Company, LLC-Invasive Species Management
  - \*Redman Services d/b/a Jason Brewer-Invasive Species Management
  - \*Contract with Ducks Unlimited Inc.-Waterfowl Habitat Projects, Prairie Pothole Region of Canada
  - \*Pass It On: Outdoor Mentors, Inc. - Shooting Sports Outreach Program
  - \*Public Land Management Projects
  - \*Contract Amendment-1, Salter Wetlands Associates, LLC-Road Repair, Nishnabotna Wildlife Unit
  - \*Contract with the Story County Conservation Board (Hickory Grove Park)- Proposed Beach Area Improvements
  - \*Contract with Iowa State University-Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee Study
  - \*Contract with Watersmith Engineering-Waubonsie Water Supply Improvement
  - \*Publicly Owned Lakes Watershed Eligibility Program-FY25
  - \*Contract with the City of Marshalltown and Iowa River OHV Club-Nicholson Ford OHV Park
- Approval of the Minutes
- Director's Remarks
- Division Administrator's Remarks
  - \*Donations
- Chapter 33, Resource Enhancement and Protection Program: County, City, Private Open Spaces and Conservation Education Grant Programs – Adopted and Final Rule
- 2025-2026 Deer Management Zone Hunts
- Proposed County Antlerless Quota Changes for the 2025-26 Seasons
- Larson Logging Company, LLC-Invasive Species Management
- \*Redman Services d/b/a Jason Brewer-Invasive Species Management

- \*Contract with Ducks Unlimited Inc.-Waterfowl Habitat Projects, Prairie Pothole Region of Canada
- \*Pass It On: Outdoor Mentors, Inc. - Shooting Sports Outreach Program
- \*Public Land Management Projects
  - Management Agreement, Cody Shooting Complex (LE Range) – Scott County Conservation Board & Scott County Sheriff's Office
- Small Construction Projects-Ledges State Park Boat Ramp Addition, Road and Parking Lot Repair at Pikes Peak State Park, Roadside Erosion Repair and Pammel State Park.
- Large Construction Projects
  - Nishnabotna Wildlife Unit, Flood Damage Repairs Phase 6 – Fremont County
  - Nishnabotna Wildlife Unit, Flood Damage Repairs Phase 5 – Fremont County
  - Viking Lake & Lake of Three Fires State Parks, Pavement Preservation – Montgomery and Taylor Counties
  - Lewis & Clark State Park, Steel Roof Replacements – Monona County
- Land Acquisition Projects
  - Fish Farm Mounds WMA, Allamakee County – Robert Honeywell
  - Turkey Valley WMA, Greene County – Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
  - Eagle Flats Wetland Complex, Hancock County – Mattox Farms L.L.C.
- \*Contract Amendment-1, Salter Wetlands Associates, LLC-Road Repair, Nishnabotna Wildlife Unit
- \*Contract with the Story County Conservation Board (Hickory Grove Park)-Proposed Beach Area Improvements
- \*Contract with Iowa State University-Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee Study
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- \*Publicly Owned Lakes Watershed Eligibility Program-FY25
- \*Contract with the City of Marshalltown and Iowa River OHV Club-Nicholson Ford OHV Park
- Contract with Carahsoft Technology Corporation-Asset Management System
- General Discussion

Next meeting, July 10, in Des Moines.

For a complete agenda and tour schedule, go to [www.iowadnr.gov/nrc](http://www.iowadnr.gov/nrc)



[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)

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