

IOWATER

Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring

Announcing 2006 Iowa Winners

3rd Annual RIVER OF WORDS® International Environmental Poetry & Art Competition

As the day's last sliver of sunlight dances westward across the land, it reveals in each wetland, lake, & stream a reflection that cannot be described with earthly words. Perhaps these visual reflections are what draw us to lakes & rivers for our emotional reflections – the sights, the sounds, the serenity – there's something about water that captivates us & sets us free.

These reflections reveal our physical connections with water – our actions on land are directly reflected in our streams, rivers, & lakes. If we manage our land wisely, we can protect, preserve, & enjoy our aquatic resources forever. The first step to understanding the interconnectedness of our world is gaining a profound respect for the resources found within it, & the first step in acquiring this respect is spending time in & around our streams, rivers, & lakes – paddling, swimming, fishing, monitoring the quality of their waters – letting their reflections lead us to our own.

Each year, in affiliation with The Library of Congress Center for the Book, River of Words® conducts a free international poetry & art

River Run

I run,
But not alone,
For the river runs beside me
The water runs between the banks
Following a course towards an unknown destination
The water
In constant motion
Its only goal
To reach the end of its course
In which
The river leads it
Flowing silently
Yet beneath the surface
Great power can be found
As I run, I tire
I feel I can run no more
And look upon the river for inspiration
I continue running, running to a destination
A destination I will only know when I reach it
My legs, burning with the sensation of each step
Begin a constant motion again
My only goal, to reach my destination
Running silently, breathing in and out
On the surface, I may look like a simple runner
But underneath the surface
I am an athlete
Filled with the will power,
Of a river

Carl Kirpes
age 16
Cumming, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

...from IOWATER's Coordinator

Liquid highways to adventure – it's how a growing number of Iowans are starting to view Iowa's rivers, and how *Paddler Magazine* describes water trails. With accesses serving as trailheads, the rivers themselves provide the trails. In Iowa, thousands of miles of navigable streams and rivers carry sediment, nutrients, and bacteria to the Mississippi, but when viewed as water trails, they also carry enormous potential. Many of them, however, are in need of a cleanup.

Last month, 150 Project AWARE volunteers removed 24 tons of trash from the Iowa and English Rivers. Unfortunately, much more had to be left behind; there was simply too much. Also left behind were the sediment, nutrients, and bacteria that could not simply be tossed in a canoe and recycled with the trash. However, as more and more Iowans call for clean water, these problems will be addressed.

None of the 99 miles Project AWARE covered are officially part of a water trail, but they would make great trails with a few improvements. River access, for example, was difficult along the route. Water quality is also not ideal; bacteria levels exceed EPA recommendations for human contact on these rivers. Nonetheless, the potential for adventure is tremendous.

What does clean water mean to you? For some, it means exploring Iowa's liquid highways to adventure – the cleaner the water, the greater the adventure will be.

Brian Soenen

Governor's Iowa High School Water Summit and Scholarship Program *High School Juniors and Seniors Compete for \$10,000 in Scholarships*

The Governor's Iowa High School Water Summit and Scholarship Program will be held for the first time November 15, 2006 at the State Capitol, Des Moines, IA. This one-day event is being held to develop future leaders who understand the importance of protecting water quality and who have an awareness of the broad array of challenges facing communities in protecting Iowa's water resources today and in the future.

Students compete for the opportunity to attend the Summit and win scholarships. It is targeted to high school students who will be juniors and seniors in the fall of 2006. Those chosen will participate in a creative and unique learning experience.

The deadline for applications is September 1, 2006. For more information or to apply, visit: www.iowadnr.gov/water/summit.html.



Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0034

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Katie Foreman, Snapshot Event Coordinator
kforeman@igsb.uiowa.edu phone: (319) 335-1571

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contest for youth on the theme of watersheds. The contest is designed to help youth explore the natural & cultural history of the place they live, & to express what they discover through poetry & art. Entries not chosen as finalists or grand prize winners in the international contest are returned to the IOWATER program, where they are judged in an Iowa statewide River of Words® contest.

River, Come

River, river,
Come to a sandbar
And take a break there.
Then go back and flow again until you reach a dam.
Say hello to the beaver, who builds the dam for you.

Clayton Dryden
age 6
Marion, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

For entry forms for the 2007 International contest, contact:

IOWATER, Wallace State Office Building
502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, IA 50319 - 0034
Phone: 515-205-8587 Email: iowater@iowater.net
www.iowater.net

Send entries by Feb. 15, 2007 to:

River of Words
PO Box 4000 J
Berkeley, CA 94704 USA
Phone: 510-548-POEM (7636)

The River

River you flow so swiftly full of fish.
Boats use you to transport goods.
Through the mountains and through the hills.
Never ending, gaining strength with more rivers flowing into you.
You get so big, you could conquer anything.
Your bottom is mud but you keep going.

Taylor Radke
age 12
Galva, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

River Lullaby

The whippoorwill sings a lullaby,
the lark and thrush join along.
But where the stream
meets the river is the beginning
of our song.

We ebb and flow on the water's
light. We dance along like the
river sprites.

May your heart be
bright as we sing tonight of our
river lullaby.

So close your eyes while
you drift along. Yes, sing with us
of our river song. May your fears
be gone as you dance along to
our river lullaby.

Where the stream returns
to the river is where we say goodbye.

But when you return, together
we can sing of our
river lullaby.

Cherell Hayes
age 15
Earlham, Iowa
IOWA WINNER

Volunteer viewpoints ... in their own words.



Serendipity article and photos by Jim Riggs



I believe in serendipity. When I get out in the wilds, serendipitous events happen.

On Sunday May 21, the Justice Group from Walnut Hills United Methodist Church planned a Sunday celebration called One Earth, One Future. As part of this celebration, Susan Heathcote from the Iowa Environmental Council talked to us about our Walnut Creek watershed and how it fit with the bigger pictures of the Raccoon, Des Moines, and Mississippi River watersheds. She shared some testing IOWATER volunteers have been doing on Walnut Creek and invited us to join her that afternoon in a study of a piece of that watershed below our church.

In the afternoon a group of us hiked with Susan a few blocks west of the church to Walnut Creek. As we turned from Hickman Road to Deer Creek Trail we noticed a sewer smell and a pool of rancid smelling water that had accumulated near a power pole about forty feet from the creek. A strip of



rich green grass leading from the spill to the creek was evidence of pollution flowing into the creek just above the Hickman Road bridge. I took pictures of the spill area (photo, left) and promised to report the problem to the City of Urbandale the next morning.

As we continued our hike toward our monitoring location, about fifty yards up Deer Creek Road some of our group noticed a deep tan and white spot in the underbrush. A meter from the road a tiny fawn hid her eyes from our gaze. At about the same time, the leaders of our group met the doe on the creek bank below.

As we all assembled on a sand bar we began our study of the creek. For two hours we tested the chemistry of the water and dipped our nets for critters, including red worms, Mayfly larva, a crayfish, and a skittery water bug. When we finished with our tests, wet, muddy and satisfied, we made our way back to the church. On our way out the fawn was still waiting patiently as directed by its mother.

My theory of serendipity held double on this excursion. That wonderful fawn was a thrill of a lifetime and my call to Urbandale's City Hall the next day brought them out to investigate. They found some recent utility work in the ditch had accidentally cut an Urbandale sewer line and raw sewage was working its way toward Walnut Creek and the Des Moines Metro water supply downstream. We had a second serendipitous event from our One Earth, One Future celebration.



Southeast Polk Students Clean Up Camp Creek

article and photo by Karen Hobbs, Biology Teacher – Southeast Polk High School



Correy Adams removes a tire from Camp Creek.

On March 14, 2006, over 70 Southeast Polk High School Molecular Biology students were involved in the cleanup of a portion of the Camp Creek Watershed. They were joined by numerous volunteers from all sectors of Polk County, including the Iowa Dept. of Agriculture, Metro Waste Authority, and Growing Green Communities.

The day was sunny and cool. There were some sections of Camp Creek that still had thin coverings of ice over the water. This didn't deter the students from their mission to collect tires and other illegally dumped materials from the creek. Each group was armed with a map created using GIS technology that indicated the site of each discarded tire, barrel, and piece of garbage that needed to be removed. This was brought to roadside and was later properly disposed of in the Metro Park East Landfill.

In the fall, these students were trained in IOWATER testing as part of the ecology unit in my class. Each year my classes go to Thomas Mitchell Park and perform water quality tests on Camp Creek. In addition to the cleanup on March 14th, the students performed some IOWATER tests. When the students returned to school, they were asked to write a reflection about this experience.

"I finally figured out how much effort it takes to go back and fix our problems." – Kelsey Nesheim

"By helping clean up the creek, I have a completely different view on pollution. I just wanted to pick up every piece of trash I could." – Stephanie Voss

"I really liked the feeling I got from knowing that I helped. Though my body is really stiff from the work, it was definitely worth it." – Kristen Call

"I swear, if I see someone throw something in a river – they're going with it!" – Brad Harris

This was a powerful community service project for my students. I believe that each one of them was changed that day. They were so surprised to see all those tires in the stream and quickly learned how much effort it takes to remove the trash that was thoughtlessly dumped in this creek. I was changed too. It was amazing what was accomplished when the community joined forces with the common goal to clean up our watershed. To finish the cleanup of the Camp Creek Watershed will take time and require educating the public on the proper disposal of unwanted materials. In addition to continuing our IOWATER testing of Camp Creek, we will devote a portion of the day cleaning up the trash that litters this watershed. Jaymes Savage wrote, *"In some years, we'll be drinking from the creek."*

We'd like to hear
from you, so
send us a note...
about your
IOWATER activities,
thoughts, and
ideas **...in your
own words.**

Upcoming events

... snapshot sampling & more.



Aug. 25-27 (Fri-Sun); Grove to Grove Lower Wapsi River Cleanup. Contact: Melisa (309) 737-9016 or KJ at rebar@netins.net

Sep. 16 (Sat); Jefferson County Snapshot
Contact: Jack Eastman (641) 469-5760
jacktoni@iowatelecom.net

Sep. 16 (Sat); Iowa Clean Rivers Team Cleanup
N. Racoon River – Merritt Access to Brown's Bridge
Contact: Don Propst (515) 265-8733
dpsprftr@netscape.com

Sep. 23 (Sat); Beaver Creek Snapshot
Contact: Steve Witmer (515) 727-7765
switmer@ci.johnston.ia.us

Sep. 23 (Sat); Upper Iowa River Cleanup
Contact: Deb Keefe (877) 787-2267
keefe@earthlink.net

Sep. 26 (Tues); Cedar County Snapshot
Contact: Dave Meyer rockcrk@netins.net

Sep. 30 (Sat); Whitebreast Creek Snapshot
Contact: Anne Hildebrand (515) 961-5264
Anne.Hildebrand@ia.nacdnet.net

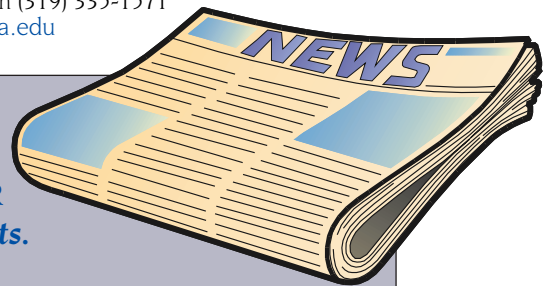
Oct. 3 (Tues); Muscatine County Snapshot
Contact: Ellen Myers (563) 263-8933
emyers@ci.muscatine.ia.us

Oct. 7 (Sat); Central Iowa River Watershed Snapshot
Contact: Dr. Dean Reynolds (641)-753-3997 (day);
(641)753-0103 (evening) dean@marshalltownwater.com

Oct. 10 (Tues); Scott County Snapshot
Contact: Carrie Anderson (563) 391-1403 x3
carrie.anderson@ia.nacdnet.net

Oct. 14 (Sat); Old Man's/Clear Creek Snapshot
Contact: Dave Ratliff (319) 354-1397 (day)
(319) 337-4445 (evening) oldmancreek@qwest.net

Oct. 14 (Sat); IOWATER Spring Statewide Snapshot
Contact: Katie Foreman (319) 335-1571
kforeman@igsb.uiowa.edu



IOWATER action!

Press releases, events, & news articles involving IOWATER monitors – Many thanks to all of you for your continued efforts.

- **Black Hawk County** – Congratulations to Dr. Clark Porter and his 4th grade Expanded Learning Program students at the Dr. Walter Cunningham School for Excellence, who received a Governor's Environmental Excellence Award in May for their study of urban and rural watersheds in the Waterloo area that allowed city officials to correct two significant sources of pollution in the watershed.
- **Carroll County** – Mary Koester and the Kuemper Middle School Science Club conducted a stream walk and water testing at Graham Park.
- **Clinton County** – The Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District used the IOWATER program with the Prairie Creek Watershed Project.
- **Iowa County** – Maria Koschmeder, Iowa County naturalist, helped 6th graders from Williamsburg monitor sites along Old Mans Creek as part of a science project.
- **Iowa County** – The Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service and Coordinator James Martin included the IOWATER program in the Clear Creek Watershed Project.
- **Muscatine County** – Congratulations to Brian Ritter, who was named Muscatine Community Collage's 2006 Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Member for his work educating students in Environmental Science and for including IOWATER in his curriculum.
- **O'Brien County** – Brianne, Denise, Dillon, and Doug Hicks and Project AWARE were featured in an article in the June issue of *Better Homes and Gardens* on volunteer vacations with your family.
- **Plymouth County** – Ron Wilmot, Kim Meerdink and Dwain Wilmot and Students from Akron-Westfield Schools conducted a water monitoring research project on the Big Sioux River.
- **Sioux County** – Evan DeGroot is conducting IOWATER monitoring and the collection of water samples for lab analyses of Sixmile Creek in Sioux County as part of a watershed development grant.
- **Wright County** – Thanks to the Wright County Soil and Water Conservation Commissioners for supporting Wright County citizens who attend IOWATER workshops.

If we missed your happenings, please call or email Jackie Gautsch with an update.

THANK YOU . . . THANK YOU . . . THANK YOU . . .

Project AWARE staff would like to thank the many sponsors who made our 2006 'Volunteer River Cleanup on the Iowa River' possible, the presenters who taught us along the way, the cooperating landowners and communities who supported us, and the hundreds of participants who make "us" who we are. We'll see 'ya on the river!

Platinum Paddle Sponsors (\$3,000+) – DNR, IIHR – Hydrosience & Engineering (UI), Iowa City Sanitary Landfill, IOWATER, ISU Outdoor Recreation Program, Keepers of the Land, REAP, United States Geological Survey, University Hygienic Laboratory

Distinguished Bow Sponsors (\$2,000) – Hawkeye Waste Systems, Inc.

Golden Yoke Sponsors (\$1,000) – Hy-Vee, Inc., Stumpf Concrete, University of Iowa Recreational Services

Silver Stern Sponsors (Up to \$1,000) – 1-800 Got Junk, Aero Rental, B4 Brands, Berkley, Boy Scout Troop 242, Brad Coffman, Central Iowa Paddlers, CHEMetrics, Inc., City of Kalona, City of Riverside, Conservation Services Group, Cub Foods, Culligan Water Technologies, Dana and Liz Christiansen, Dean's Auto Body, Fin and Feather, Fuel Rescue, Hart-Frederick Consultants, Integrated DNA Technologies, Iowa Arts Council, Iowa City Water Dept., Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Recycling Association, Iowa Waste Exchange, Johnson Co. Conservation Board, Environmental Advocates of Johnson County, Johnson County Pheasants Forever, Loparex, Louisa Co. Conservation Board, Louisa County Regional Solid Waste Agency, MidAmerica Recycling, MidAmerican Energy Company, NatureMapping, New Pioneer Coop, Patrick Durian, Rick's Grille & Spirits, Riverside Canoe Rentals, Seata Sea Watersports, Southeast Multi-County Solid Waste Agency, Snyder & Associates, Squaw Creek Watershed Coalition, Story Co. Conservation Board, Stumpf Construction, The Nature Conservancy, Thompson's Canoes, Townsend Engineering Company, Tyson, University Camera

5th Annual Project AWARE – June 16-23, 2007 – Stay tuned for more details...

www.iowaprojectaware.com

. . . THANK YOU . . . THANK YOU . . . THANK YOU

IOWATER 2006 Level I Workshop Schedule

Date & Time	Location	Contact	Phone	E-mail
August 18, (5-9 PM) August 19, (9 AM -3 PM) @ Starr's Cave Nature Center	Des Moines Co.	Kim Perlstein 11627 Starr's Cave Rd. Burlington, IA 52601	(319) 753-5808	starcave@co.des-moines.ia.us
Sept 8, (5-9 PM) Sept 9, (9 AM- 3 PM) @ JF Kennedy Memorial Park Lodge	Webster County	T.J. Lynn 1200 3rd Ave. NW Fort Dodge, IA 50501	(515) 573-4411	Thomas.Lynn@ia.nacdn.net
Sept 15, (5-9 PM) Sept 16, (8 AM- 2 PM) @ Hurstville Interpretive Center <i>This workshop will be followed by a Bacteria Monitoring workshop (Sept 16, 2-6 pm), contact Ann for details.</i>	Jackson County	Ann Burns 18670-63rd St. Maquoketa, IA 52060	(563) 652-3783	amburns29@jacksonccb.com
Oct 6, (5-9 PM) Oct 7, (9 AM- 3 PM) @ North Liberty Recreation Center	Johnson County	Jason Egly 520 W. Cherry St. North Liberty, IA 52317	(319) 626-5716	jhegly@yahoo.com

To register for a particular workshop, get in touch with the contact person listed.

IOWATER 2006 Advanced Workshops*

***You must have attended a Level 1 workshop to participate in an advanced workshop.**

Benthic Macroinvertebrate Indexing and Bacteria Monitoring Workshops:

Date	Location	Topic & Time
Sept. 30*	Nahant Marsh (Scott County)	Bacteria (9 AM - 12:30 PM) & Benthic (1-5 PM)

* A light lunch will be served at 12:30 pm, please join us if you are attending any IOWATER workshop that day.

To register, contact Jackie at (515) 281-4476 or jacklyn.gautsch@dnr.state.ia.us, or visit www.iowater.net.

IOWATER

Wallace State Office Building
502 E. 9th St.
Des Moines, IA 50319



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I'd like to be removed from your mailing list."

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from our mailing list.*

2006 IOWA WINNERS !

RIVER of WORDS

3rd Annual Environmental

Poetry & Art
Competition

2006 IOWA ART WINNER

Freedom...Cool, Clean Water

by Scott Skophammer age 14 Fort Dodge, IA

