

**21<sup>st</sup> Annual Iowa Project AWARE**  
**Skunk River, July 7-12, 2024**  
[www.iowaprojectaware.org](http://www.iowaprojectaware.org)

21st Annual Iowa Project AWARE • July 7-12, 2024 • Skunk River • Skunk Wildlife Area to Brighton Access, Brighton Access to Mac Coon Access, Mac Coon Access to Oakland Mills Access, Stephenson Park Access to Upper Skunk River Access

- **River Miles** – 60.2
- **Volunteers** – 269
  - Average volunteers per day – 183
  - Age Range – 5 to 82 years
  - River Cleanup Rookies – 79 (29%)
  - In addition to Iowa, volunteers came from Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.
- **Sponsors** – 101
- **Total Trash & Recyclables** – 7,253 lbs (3.8 tons)
  - Recyclables – 7200 lbs (3.6 tons; 99.3% recycled)
    - Tires - 48 (1,600 lbs; 0.8 tons)
    - Scrap Metal – 3,060 lbs (1.53 tons)
    - Misc. recycling (appliances; burnable; plastic; cardboard; pop cans; glass; compost) – 2,540 lbs. (1.3 tons)
  - Trash – 53 lbs. (0 tons; 0.7% landfilled)

**2024 Project AWARE Volunteer and Sponsor Summary Stats**

- Paddled and removed trash from 60.4 miles of the Skunk River from Skunk Wildlife Area to Brighton Access, Brighton Access to Mac Coon Access, Mac Coon Access to Oakland Mills Access, Stephenson Park Access to Upper Skunk River Access.
- Alternative plans were implemented for Monday due to high river levels; these activities included invasive species removal, fly fishing, a bird hike, a mushroom hike, and paddling Lake Darling in a dugout canoe and regular canoes. The stretch of river from Faulkner’s access to Stephenson Park Access was not completed, as a day needed to be removed from the schedule to account for being off the river on Monday.
- 269 participants registered for the event
- Daily average number of participants on the river – 183. Number of volunteers on the water each day: Monday (220), Tuesday (219), Wednesday (183), Thursday (148), and Friday (144).
- In addition to Iowa, volunteers for this year’s Project AWARE were from Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.
- 79 (29%) of volunteers were first year volunteers; 15 volunteers were recognized for their 5<sup>th</sup> year on Iowa Project AWARE; 10 participants were recognized for being on Project AWARE 10 years, and 4 participants were recognized for 15 years, and 6 participants were recognized for 20 years.
- Volunteers ranged in age from 5 to 82; 61 (23%) of this year’s participants were 18 years or younger; 10 (4%) were 10 years of age or younger; 53 (20%) of the volunteers were age 62 or older.
- 122 participants were registered for all five days on the river.
- Participants included 35 members of the Conservation Corps of Iowa, including 6 as Iowa Project AWARE staff for the week. One AmeriCorps member through Bur Oak Land Trust who participated as staff.
- A total of 101 sponsors made this event possible through both monetary and in-kind donations. Grants supporting this year’s event included: Cargill, Community Foundation of Des Moines County, Extreme Terrain Clean Trail, Greater Jefferson County Foundation, Hy-Vee, ITC Charitable Giving Program, Kwik Trip/Kwik Star, MidAmerican Energy Foundation, Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant Program, Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Washington County Riverboat Foundation
- 35% of participants identified as beginners to paddling; 37% intermediate; and 28% as experienced

Click the following to enjoy photos from the 2024 Iowa Project AWARE river cleanup on the Skunk River.

- [Google Photo Album](#)

**In-kind sponsor contributions included the following:**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Donated camping and use of park facilities    | 5. Shuttle location parking        |
| 2. Cut resistant gloves                          | 6. Educational programs            |
| 3. Use of canoes, lifejackets, paddles, trailers | 7. Use of trucks and dump trailers |
| 4. Hydration and nutrition supplies for week     | 8. Staff for the event             |

9. Zanafel poison ivy cream
10. Recycling of tires
11. Hand sanitizer
12. Recycling bags

13. Bug Soother
14. Donated shower facilities
15. Local planning committee
16. Storm shelters

## 2024 Project AWARE Sponsors

### Platinum Paddle Sponsors

Big Grove Brewery • Cargill • Conservation Corps Iowa • Diane and Ken Birt • Get Fresh • Grandinetti's Metal Recycling • Greg and Liz Soenen • Henry County Conservation • Iowa DNR River Programs • Iowa Flood Center • IIHR Hydroscience and Engineering • Izaak Walton League • Koch Fertilizer, LLC • Linn County Conservation • Lua Brewing • MidAmerican Energy Foundation • N-Compass, Inc. • Nick and Maureen Gaeta • Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant Program • State Hygienic Lab at the University of Iowa • The Greater Jefferson County Community Foundation • Toppling Goliath Brewing Co. • University of Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist • Washington County Riverboat Foundation • Zanafel • Zimmerman Buildings, Inc.

### Golden Yoke Sponsors

Ansell Protective Products • Community Foundation of Des Moines County • Hy-Vee, Inc. • Iowa Confluence Water Trail (ICON) • Iowa Whitewater Coalition • ITC • Lake Darling State Park - Parks: Forests and Preserves • Shelly and James Weeks • Washington County Conservation

### Silver Stern Sponsors

Charlie Becker • Dan Ceynar • Greg and Cheryl Long • Iowa Archeological Society • Jim and Donna McCabe • Jeff and Christianna White • John Deere • Mark Bohner • Midwest Old Threshers • Richard Worm • Rick Dietz • Riverside Casino & Golf Resort • Steve Simpson • Tony Geerts

### River Steward Sponsors

Alan Hermanson • B4 Brands • Brodigan Bros. • Friends of Conservation in Henry County, LTD • Iowa Geological Survey • Iowa Master Naturalists • John, Shawna, Aaron, Madisen and Katelynn Larison • Jim Urban • Justin Allen • Kalina River • Kent Precision Foods Group (KPFGB) • Lynette Seigley • Mike Parker • One Love LLC / La Calle • Stantec • Steve Veysey

### River Rescue Sponsors

Adelaide Shea • Angel Shawda • Caitlin Waugh • Can Shed LLC • Cedar Valley Paddlers • Cindy Barrowcliff • Des Moines County Conservation • Don Wall • Eric Boehm • Extreme Terrain's Clean Trail Initiative • Floyd SWCD • Franklin SWCD • Gary Stone • George and Janelle McClain • Jefferson County Conservation • Joe Artz • Kathy Hertz • Kwik Trip, Inc. • Lee County Conservation Board • Ray and Sally Ceynar • Rod Schreck • Ryan Ceynar • Skunk River Paddlers • Tamara Webb • The Dental Practice • Tom O'Neill • Troop 242 BSA • Wells Fargo Community Cares Grant

### Life Jacket Sponsors

Carol Westphal • Charity Nebbe • Howard Staber • Loyd Herzberg • Mary Hyland • Michelle Birt Leeds • Rebecca Fenelon • Rick Wicks • Shaun Ahern

## Media Coverage for Iowa Project AWARE 2024

### Press releases distributed

- [Volunteer River Cleanup Coming to the Skunk River this Summer](#) (March 4, 2024)
- [May Press Release - May 31, 2024](#)  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_Jvm8pdeLnxuTelCrVdm4UVzXLInGTD6/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_Jvm8pdeLnxuTelCrVdm4UVzXLInGTD6/edit)

### Publications

- [The Hawk Eye](#) - March 26, 2024 [A.W.A.R.E. cleanup coming here this summer | The Hawk Eye - Burlington, Iowa | mississippivalleypublishing.com](#)
- [Registration Announcement The Hawk Eye](#) - March 12, 2024 [Cleanup project coming to Skunk River | Daily Democrat, Fort Madison, Iowa | mississippivalleypublishing.com](#)
- [Allsides Article](#) - March 12, 2024 [Cleanup project coming to Skunk River | AllSides](#)
- [Story County Iowa Article \( Jeff White article \)](#) - February 12, 2024 - [Blog • White awarded with 2023 Olav Smedal Conservation Award](#)

- **Fort Madison Daily Democrat** - March 24, 2024 - [https://www.mississippivalleypublishing.com/daily\\_democrat/a-w-a-r-e-cleanup-coming-here-this-summer/article\\_1aeeb3b4-ea04-11ee-ad31-97c43df84e93.html?utm\\_campaign=blox&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR2wO4NUeUW5oq0wW5UvuuFcJec6njxcEiDa9vXGBZYYJcdZPcd0ctYfU](https://www.mississippivalleypublishing.com/daily_democrat/a-w-a-r-e-cleanup-coming-here-this-summer/article_1aeeb3b4-ea04-11ee-ad31-97c43df84e93.html?utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR2wO4NUeUW5oq0wW5UvuuFcJec6njxcEiDa9vXGBZYYJcdZPcd0ctYfU)
- **Washington City Commerce Event Mention** - March 29 - [21st Annual Iowa Project Aware](#)
- **Jefferson County Conservation Article** - April 5, 2024 [Project AWARE 2024 – Jefferson County Conservation](#)
- **Daily Gate City** - May 7th 2024 - [Project AWARE to hold Skunk River cleanup | Daily Democrat, Fort Madison, Iowa | mississippivalleypublishing.com](#)
- **Mississippi Valley Publication Fort Madison Daily Democrat** - June 6, 2024 [Signups being taken for 21st anniversary river cleanup | Daily Democrat, Fort Madison, Iowa | mississippivalleypublishing.com](#)
- **Southeast Iowa Union article on Educational Programs** - June 24 -2024 [Project AWARE offers free education programs | Southeast Iowa Union](#)

#### Television

- **KCRG Postpone Coverage - July, 08 2024** [Iowa Project AWARE postpones Skunk River cleanup due to high water levels](#)

#### Newspaper

- [Cleanup Project Coming to Skunk River this Summer](#) (November 30, 2023)
- **The Gazette** - Apr 15, 2024 [Curious Iowa: How often are the state's rivers cleaned? | The Gazette](#)
- **Youtube Short from The Burlington Beacon** - April 11th, 2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q1MKeOa5Us>
- **Southeast Iowa Union Article-** Jun 7, 2024 <https://www.southeastiowaunion.com/news/river-cleanup-project-announces-campsites-speake>

#### Radio

- **KILJ Radio** - June 10, 2024
- [Iowa Project AWARE Coming Through Mount Pleasant and Southeast Iowa July 7-12th](#) (June 10, 2024)
- **KCII Radio Coverage** - July 7, 2024 [Iowa Project AWARE Begins Cleanup Of Skunk River This Week | KCII Radio - The One to Count On](#)
- **KCII Radio announcement** - March 20, 2024 [Registration Opens Today For Annual Skunk River Cleanup | KCII Radio - The One to Count On](#)
- **Washington County Board of Supervisors** - May 9th 2024 [Washington County Board of Supervisors Hear Presentation From Iowa Project AWARE | KCII Radio - The One to Count On](#)
- **KILJ Radio Announcement** - March 15, 2024 [Volunteer to Clean Skunk River This Summer! - KILJ Radio - Latest News from Mt. Pleasant, Fairfield, Fort Madison, Wayland, and Muscatine - Southeast Iowa Updates](#)
- **KILJ Radio** - June 10th [Iowa Project Aware Coming Through Mount Pleasant and Southeast Iowa July 7-12th - KILJ Radio](#)
- **Talk of Iowa** - July 16, 2024 [A dugout canoe gives Iowans the opportunity to touch Indigenous history | Iowa Public Radio](#)

#### Miscellaneous

- **Des Moines County Article** - March 15, 2024 [https://desmoinescounty.iowa.gov/conservation/blog/ready\\_schedule\\_go/](https://desmoinescounty.iowa.gov/conservation/blog/ready_schedule_go/)
- **Our Facebook Post** - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/iowaprojectaware/>
- **ISU Live Green Article** - March 1, 2024 [March: Get on the Clean Water Wave – Live Green!](#)
- **Grinnell Iowa River Directory web page mention** - [Organizations Supporting Iowa's Waterways](#)
- **KCII Radio " In touch With Southeast Iowa" With Nina Marquardt** - June 25, 2024 [IN TOUCH WITH SOUTHEAST IOWA WITH NINA MARQUARDT: IOWA PROJECT AWARE RIVER CLEANUP | KCII Radio - The One to Count On](#)
- **B4 Brands Teams with Iowa Project AWARE to Clean Hawkeye State's Rivers** - April 26, 2024 [B4 Brands Teams with Iowa Project Aware to Clean Hawkeye State's Rivers](#)

#### Educational Programs for Iowa Project AWARE 2024

##### Sunday, July 7

- **2:30 pm - Afternoon Programs** (Lake Darling State Park, Brighton)
  - *Canoe Skills and Safety Clinic* - John Wenck (Iowa DNR and ACA Certified Instructor), Rick Dietz, Jim Dodd, and Shelly Weeks (Iowa Project AWARE Volunteers)
- **3:00 pm – Concurrent Afternoon Programs** (Lake Darling State Park, Brighton)
  - *Corridors of Conservation: How INHF works to protect and restore Iowa's land, water and wildlife* - Erica Place (INHF)

- o *Knots for Paddlers* - Jeff White (Skunk River Paddler and AWARE Volunteer)
- **4:00 pm – Concurrent Afternoon Programs** (Lake Darling State Park, Brighton)
  - o *Canoe Skills and Safety Clinic* - John Wenck (Iowa DNR and ACA Certified Instructor), Rick Dietz, Jim Dodd, and Shelly Weeks (Iowa Project AWARE Volunteers)
  - o *Mississippi River unique fish and turtles/commercial fishing* - Denny Weiss (Retired Iowa DNR Fisheries)
  - o *Bugs, Fish, and Water Quality* - Louise Biderman and Mike Birmingham (State Hygienic Laboratory at University of Iowa)
- **7:15 pm – Welcome and Introductions**

#### Monday, July 8

- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Afternoon Programs** (Lake Darling State Park, Brighton)
  - o *Turtles of Iowa* - Megan Jorgensen (Washington County Conservation)
  - o *A Travelogue of Water in the Skunk River* - Dan Haug (Prairie Rivers of Iowa)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Programs** (Lake Darling State Park, Brighton)
  - o *Unraveling the Mysteries of the Ho-Chunk Nation's Dugout Canoes in Lake Mendota* - Bill Quackenbush (Ho-Chunk Nation)
  - o *A Whiff of Skunk River Geology* - Ryan Clark (Iowa Geological Survey) and Joe Artz (University of Iowa)

#### Tuesday, July 9

- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Afternoon Programs** (Lake Darling State Park, Brighton)
  - o *The Lake Darling State Park and Friends Connection* - Don Kline (Friends of Lake Darling)
  - o *Flora, Fauna, and Fun with Archaeologists* - Elizabeth Reetz and Cherie Haury-Artz (University of Iowa)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Programs** (Lake Darling State Park, Brighton)
  - o *Mammals of the Skunk River* - Austin Roe and Lauren Snyder (Jefferson County Conservation Board)
  - o *Evaluating Risks for Recreators in Iowa's Lakes and Streams* - Claire Hruby (Drake University)

#### Wednesday, July 10

- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Afternoon Programs** (Water Works Area Oakland Mills Park, Mount Pleasant and Lewelling Quaker Museum, Salem)
  - o *The Big Bird Sit* - Kelly McKay (BioEco Research Monitoring Center)
  - o *Lewelling Quaker Museum* - Kay Wesley (location - Lewelling Quaker Museum)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Programs** (Water Works Area Oakland Mills Park, Mount Pleasant)
  - o *Birds of the Floodplain Forest* - Kelly McKay (BioEco Research Monitoring Center)
  - o *Clean Water Advocacy - Save Bloody Run Case Study and Other Uncomfortable Truths* - Steve Veysey (Protecting Outstanding Iowa Waters)
- **9:00 pm – Late Evening Program** (Water Works Area Oakland Mills Park, Mount Pleasant)
  - o *Night Sounds Prowl* - Kelly McKay (BioEco Research Monitoring Center)

#### Thursday, July 11

- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Afternoon Programs** (Old Threshers Campground, Mount Pleasant)
  - o *Snakes aren't Scary* - Kendall Prehn (Henry County Conservation)
  - o *Meet a Live Animal* - Jacklyn Goodman (Des Moines County Conservation)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Programs** (Old Threshers Campground, Mount Pleasant)
  - o *Iowa Mussel Blitz over the years* - Scott Gritters (Iowa DNR)
  - o *Honey Bee and Pollination* - Tony Kempker (Friends of Conservation in Henry County LTD)