ThousandsofIowanstakeastandforrivers

Campaigntoprotectriversgainsmomentum

Thissummer,EnvironmentIowastaff
fannedoutacrossthestateandtalkedtolowansfromallwalksoflifeabouttheneedtoprotectourriversfromagriculturalpollution.

Thisface-to-faceoutreachhelpedmobilizebroadgrassrootssupportforourplantocleanupIowa’sriversandlimitdangerousrunoffpollutionfromBigAg,withthousandsofcitizensjoiningourcampaignandsigningpetitionscalling
ontheLegislaturetoact.

470waterwaystoocontaminated
Thereare470riversandstreamscrossingthestatethatareattoocontaminatedforfishing,
swimmingorotheruse.Andrunoffpol-
lutionfromBigAg—chemicalfertilizer,
animalmanureandothersubstancesthat
don’tbelonginourwaterways—shares
muchoftheblame.

Inadditiontocontaminatingourrivers,recent
recordlevelsornitratepollution—attrib-
utabletorunofffromBigAg—pose
amajorthreattocleandrinkingwater
forIowansthatrelyonresidentialwells.

That’swhywe’reurgingtheLegislatureto
adoptoursmartthree-pointplantocut
runoffpollutionandprotecttheriverswe
love.Theplancallsforstrong,manda-
torystandardsforrunoffpollutionfrom
industrialagriculture;a“polluterpays
principle,”sothatBigAgwillhavetopay
forpollutingourrivers;andanenforce-
ableplanforcleaningupourrivers,with
atimetableandmeasurablegoals.

Senators,othersonboard
OnJuly2,EnvironmentIowастaffde-
levered5,000petitionsignaturestopo
tate
Sen.DickDearden,chairoftheNatural
ResourcesCommittee,callingonthe
LegislaturetoprotectourriversfromBig
Ag’sdangerouspollution.

WewerejoinedbySen.JoeBolkcom;Bill
Stowe,CEOofDesMoinesWaterWorks;
andGaryKlicker,alocalIowafarmer.

“Ifanordinaryfarmlikelancanmakesuremanureisn’tflowingfrommystrings
andstreams,thenso
can
BigAg,”saidKlicker.“Itdoesn’tmatter
whatthesizefarmyouhave;weallmustdo
ourpart.”
Recent action

Proposed fracking rules fail to protect natural heritage

In May, as one of the first major policy decisions for new Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed scant protections for America's natural heritage with its revised rules for hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.” The move comes even as the oil and gas industry is seeking to expand drilling near treasured places and drinking water sources for millions of Americans.

In fall 2011, the Obama administration’s science advisory panel on fracking recommended the “preservation of unique and/or sensitive areas as off limits to drilling.” Yet the BLM’s proposal does nothing to implement this core principle: It fails to bar the use of toxic chemicals near sensitive areas; establish safe standards for fracking well construction; or even ban the use of open fracking waste pits. “We urge President Obama to step in and protect our natural heritage—and our drinking water—from dirty drilling,” said John Rumpler, senior attorney for Environment Iowa.

Fighting back against cuts to our parks

In June, the National Park Service released a memo planning for cuts to parks across the board—cuts to every park, including Iowa’s own Effigy Mounds National Monument and more. The cuts would result in reduced hours of operation, fewer services, and in some cases, even closure.

Our parks aren’t just an integral part of our natural heritage; they’re also a major economic boon. Iowa’s national monuments and historic sites attracted $12 million in tourism spending in 2011 alone. But year after year, Congress slashes funding for programs that keep our parks open.

Together with our national federation of state groups, Environment Iowa is mobilizing broad public support for our parks and calling on Congress to give these special places the resources they deserve.

To our members

In June, President Obama announced a plan to address global warming. The plan includes increased clean energy and energy efficiency, as well as cuts to carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.

These are crucial steps in the increasingly urgent fight against global warming, and President Obama’s announcement comes after years of advocacy from Environment Iowa and our allies.

The president’s speech was heartening and exciting. But it will take strong, committed activism to make this plan work—at the grassroots level, in the Capitol, and in Washington. We need to cut our dependency on dirty energy, increase our use of clean energy like solar and wind, boost energy efficiency, and dramatically cut our carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Here at Environment Iowa, we’re ready for the work ahead of us. And we’re so grateful to have you on our side.

Sincerely,

Dan Kohler, Regional Program Director

Effigy Mounds National Monument. Environment Iowa is calling on Congress to stop the cuts and give our parks the funding they deserve.
On June 25, President Obama announced a climate plan that will set limits on carbon pollution from power plants, advance energy efficiency and increase the nation’s commitment to renewable energy.

In the aftermath of record drought in Iowa and the Midwest, Hurricane Sandy, and other extreme weather events, the president’s plan to address global warming was loudly applauded by Environment Iowa and many others.

“Today, President Obama responded to the millions of Americans who have spoken out on behalf of their communities and their families, urging him to lead on climate,” said Frank Iannuzzi of Environment Iowa.

Responding to an urgent threat
Left unchecked, global warming is projected to bring to Iowa more intense storms and more unhealthy air days. Scientists have warned that the window is rapidly closing for making the necessary cuts in carbon pollution to protect future generations from the worst consequences of global warming.

To respond to this threat, the president’s plan contains several key components. It will:

- **Limit carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.** The president directed the Environmental Protection Agency to set limits on carbon pollution from new and existing power plants, which currently lack any such federal limits despite being the largest single source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming.

- **Invest in energy efficiency.** New efficiency measures for buildings and new appliances will cut carbon pollution by reducing our overall energy demand.

- **Build more renewable energy.** The plan focuses on expanding production of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar, especially on public lands.

- **Support affected communities.** The president’s plan will help ensure that communities are better equipped to prepare for and recover from the impacts of global warming.

- **Rebuild U.S. leadership internationally.** The president’s plan calls for the U.S. to actively engage in international efforts to address global warming.

**Massive grassroots support**
Environment Iowa offered special praise for the president’s pledge to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants. More than 3.2 million Americans, including thousands of Environment Iowa members, supporters and allies, submitted public comments last year in support of the president setting limits on carbon pollution from power plants.

“Carbon pollution from power plants is a huge part of the global warming problem. Today, President Obama acknowledged this and mapped out a plan for cleaning up this pollution,” said Iannuzzi. “We also know that this plan is just one important step in a multi-year effort, and that the proof of the plan’s success will be in the pudding. Environment Iowa stands ready to assist the president in following through on this critical commitment.”

Clean, renewable energy like wind power will be an integral part of federal efforts to address global warming.

In June, in his speech on climate change, President Obama emphasized the importance of clean energy in his plan to fight climate change: “The plan I’m announcing today will help us double again our energy from wind and sun.”

**Wind’s success story**
The president also praised Iowa specifically for leading the way on wind energy, noting that our state harnesses nearly 25 percent of its electricity from the wind.

In fact, Iowa’s current power generation from wind energy displaces as much global warming pollution as taking 1,187,000 cars off the road per year. And the benefits of wind are only set to increase as the wind industry grows: If wind development continues at a pace comparable to that of recent years through 2016, Iowa will reduce global warming pollution by the equivalent of taking an additional 1,047,000 cars off the road.

Nationwide, wind energy now displaces about 68 million tons of global warming pollution per year—as much as is produced by 13 million cars.

As the Obama administration moves forward in implementing its plan to address climate change, wind energy in Iowa will continue its clean energy success story.
In June, with the House Energy and Commerce hearing on the Department of Energy's budget taking place, Environment Iowa urged Congress to fund a critical energy efficiency program.

America’s buildings are responsible for nearly one-third of our global warming pollution. Energy efficiency programs are the fastest, cheapest and cleanest way to cut the pollution fueling global warming, and save consumers money at the same time.

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is a key federal program that helps low-income families, seniors and individuals with disabilities make energy efficiency improvements to their homes. But in 2012, Congress drastically slashed funding for the program; without an increase in funding for the coming financial year, it’s unlikely that the WAP will be able to continue to operate at all in some states. Environment Iowa called on Congress to fully fund the WAP and support commonsense energy efficiency improvements.