



Summer Report

Photo: TumblingFun, Creative Commons

Legislature urged to protect Iowa's rivers

Runoff pollution is fouling our waters

This summer, Environment Iowa is calling on the state Legislature to protect our rivers from runoff pollution from industrial agriculture.

Iowa's rivers should be natural treasures. But there are 470 rivers and streams across the state that are too polluted for fishing, swimming or boating. And Iowa's rivers have anywhere from two to 10 times more algae-causing phosphorus and nitrogen than is considered safe.

Big Ag is to blame

The culprit? Runoff pollution from industrial agriculture. Chemical fertilizer, manure and other polluted runoff from Big Ag is allowed to flow unregulated into our rivers and streams.

The Branstad administration was tasked with curbing runoff pollution and cleaning up our rivers. But instead of offering meaningful solutions, the administration proposed a "Nutrient Reduction Strategy" that apes Big Ag's stances and fails to address the problem of runoff pollution from industrial agriculture.

Thousands of Iowans take stand for clean water

To protect our rivers, we need to limit runoff pollution from Big Ag—and Environment Iowa has a three-point plan to get it done. We're urging the Legislature to:



Photo: ellenmacl, Creative Commons

▲ Upper Iowa River

- Set strong, mandatory standards for runoff pollution from industrial agriculture;
- Establish a "polluter pays principle," so that Big Ag will have to pay for polluting our rivers; and
- Establish an enforceable plan, with a timeline and measurable goals.

Big Ag is lobbying the legislature to keep our waterways open to pollution. To overcome the influence of these powerful polluters, we're knocking on doors across the state and talking to thousands of Iowans about the importance of protecting our rivers. By showing our legislators massive support for clean water, we can overcome the influence of Big Ag and protect our rivers for generations to come.



Photo: Hogfarm, Todd Ehlers

more online

Manure, chemical fertilizer and other runoff pollution from industrial agriculture is polluting our rivers.

Visit us online to learn more and take action: www.EnvironmentIowa.org.



To our members

I love the summer! Going to the lake, hiking in my favorite parks, or having a barbeque with neighbors on the back porch—but my favorite part of summer? Working with our citizen outreach team.

This summer, all across Iowa, passionate folks will be educating people about protecting our rivers from runoff pollution from industrial agriculture, which is largely responsible for making 470 rivers and streams in our state unsafe for swimming or fishing. They will educate thousands of people and make the voices of Iowans heard by our lawmakers in Des Moines.

The only way to stand up to Big Ag and its anti-environment allies in Des Moines is by bringing committed and educated people together. Our staff in blue T-shirts will likely be in your neighborhood doing just that. When you see them—say hello for me!

Sincerely,

Dan Kohler
Regional Director



Toward a greener future

Environment Iowa and Environment Iowa Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentIowa.org.

Photo: flickr user curlynead

Recent action

Obama strikes new tone on global warming

In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama spoke strongly of the need to address climate change by cutting carbon pollution and embracing clean energy.

Environment Iowa State Associate Amelia Schoeneman responded approvingly to the president's speech: "Americans have been asking for leadership on tackling global warming. Clean energy solutions, like cutting our energy waste in half and expanding renewable energy, as the president outlined, are critical pieces of the puzzle. We are also counting on the president to clean up carbon pollution from power plants, which will help the United States fulfill its obligation to future generations."

"We look forward to working with the Obama administration to implement and expand upon the president's plan to address global warming, as outlined in his State of the Union address," concluded Schoeneman.

Climate rally in D.C.: Say "no" to Keystone XL

On February 17, Environment Iowa federal staff joined more than 40,000 activists for the largest climate rally in history. Along with our allies from across the country, Environment Iowa participated in the "Forward on Climate" rally in Washington, D.C., and urged President Obama to follow up on his calls for strong action to address global warming.

As global warming contributes to a rise in extreme weather—including last year's record-setting drought, which left Iowa farmers with \$1 billion in crop losses—the need to address global warming grows ever more urgent. The "Forward on Climate" rally called for strong limits on carbon pollution, more clean energy, and increased energy efficiency. In addition, Environment Iowa urged the Obama administration to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, which has the potential to add 240 billions metric tons of global warming pollution to our environment.



▲ Members of our national federation outside the White House during the Feb. 17 "Forward on Climate" rally in Washington, D.C.

Photo: Staff Photo

Every Iowa county has suffered recent weather disaster

Photo: CR Artist, Creative Commons

New report says global warming to bring more extreme weather

While much of Iowa is still suffering from drought, which left Iowa's farmers with \$1 billion in crop damages, a new Environment Iowa Research & Policy Center report finds that weather-related disasters are already affecting hundreds of millions of Americans, and documents how global warming could lead to certain extreme weather events becoming even more common or more severe in the future.

The report found that every Iowa county has been hit by at least one federally declared weather-related disaster since 2007.

More severe storms, higher risk of drought

The new report, entitled "In the Path of the Storm," examined county-level weather-related disaster data for 2007 to 2012 to determine how many Iowans live in counties hit by recent weather disasters. The report also details the latest science on the projected influence of global warming on heavy rain and snow; heat, drought and wildfires; and hurricanes and coastal storms.

Key findings from the report include:

- Since 2007, federally declared weather-related disasters affected all 99 counties in Iowa, housing 3,062,309 people. Recent weather-related disasters in Iowa included flooding and severe storms, like those seen in 2008.
- Nationally, federally declared weather-related disasters have affected counties housing 243 million people since 2007—or nearly four out of five Americans.
- Higher temperatures and drier summers will likely increase the risk of drought for certain parts of the country.
- Records show that the U.S. has experienced an increase in the number of heat waves over the last half-century. Scientists project that the heat waves

and unusually hot seasons will likely become more common in a warming world.

Solution: Clean energy, cut carbon

Environment Iowa State Associate Amelia Schoeneman noted that every weather event is now a product of a climate system where global warming "loads the dice" for extreme weather, though in different ways for different types of extreme weather.

"Extreme weather is happening, it is causing very serious problems, and global warming increases the likelihood that we'll see even more extreme weather in the future," said Schoeneman. "Carbon pollution from our power plants, cars and trucks is fueling global warming, and so tackling global warming demands that we cut emissions of carbon pollution from those sources."

Environment Iowa Research & Policy Center called on decision-makers at the local, state and federal level to cut carbon pollution by expanding efforts to clean up the largest sources of pollution, shifting to clean, renewable energy, using less energy overall, and avoiding new dirty energy projects that make the carbon pollution problem even worse.



Photo: USDA.gov

research



To read the full Environment Iowa Research & Policy Center report, "In the Path of the Storm," visit www.EnvironmentIowa.org/reports.



Photo: White House

EPA changes hands

On February 14, Lisa Jackson served her last day as administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Former Administrator Jackson took on some of the nation's paramount environmental challenges during her time as head of the EPA. She was instrumental in implementing the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a landmark program in capping global warming pollution and creating investments for clean energy development.

She also oversaw the implementation of life-saving limits on mercury pollution from power plants, worked with the Department of Transportation to double the fuel efficiency and global warming pollution standards for vehicles, and more, making her four-year tenure one of the most successful in the history of the EPA.

Senate urged to confirm new administrator

In February, President Obama nominated Gina McCarthy to replace Lisa Jackson as head of the EPA. McCarthy, who was previously the assistant administrator of the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, has a strong record of winning real results for our environment and public health.

Given her past accomplishments and dedication to doing what's best for our environment, Environment Iowa joined with our national federation of state groups in calling on the Senate to confirm McCarthy as the new administrator of the EPA.

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Environment Iowa

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Iowa. We focus exclusively on protecting Iowa's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Protections sought for Loess Hills, Neal Smith NWR

In March, Environment Iowa and 18 other conservation groups, elected officials and outdoors businesses released a letter calling for lasting protections for the Loess Hills and Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge from development and budget cuts.

The letter urged President Obama to protect these special places by fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in his budget proposal. The LWCF provides our public lands with critical protection from development, all without spending a single taxpayer dollar. Unfortunately, Congress has raided the LWCF year after year, leaving a massive backlog of crucial maintenance and conservation projects.

And President Obama came through: The president's budget proposal for 2014 recommended funding of \$600 million for the LWCF, with a goal of seeing full and dedicated funding starting in 2015. That's great news for the Loess Hills, Neal Smith NWR, and all of our treasured public lands.



Photo: 5g; Creative Commons

◀ *Environment Iowa called on President Obama to protect the Loess Hills (left) and Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge by proposing full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.*