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NE IOWA RC&D KICKS OFF FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN WATER QUALITY TESTING FUNDS SOUGHT

Few resources are as vital as water. Not only do thousands of area residents drink it, swim and canoe in it, and fish from it every year, but our region also depends on it as a source of economic stability through our tourism industry. Unfortunately, the waters of Northeast Iowa contain contaminants, including atrazine, fecal bacteria, phosphorus, nitrogen, and high sediment. Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) and the Upper Iowa River Watershed (UIRW) Alliance has identified these contaminants through water testing conducted over the past several years at 30 sites across the watershed, which spans across Howard, Winneshiek, and Allamakee counties in Iowa and Fillmore and Houston counties in Minnesota.

Many continuing efforts are underway to protect and enhance the water quality in the Upper Iowa River Watershed, yet a key element in these projects is continued water testing. Armed with water quality data, the UIRW Alliance can continue to identify and implement projects in the watershed that will improve the water quality of the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries, and will give the UIRW Alliance a better indicator of the effectiveness of existing projects.

The UIRW Alliance and Northeast Iowa RC&D, Inc. recently began a campaign to raise funds for continued water testing, which costs \$13,500 annually. Those who wish to give a financial gift become a member of the "Friends of the Upper Iowa River". As a sign of appreciation, donor gifts are available at various levels of giving. Donors at the \$50 level will receive a Upper Iowa River Canoe Map & Guide; those at the \$100 level will also receive a discount card for area canoe, tube, and bike rentals; \$150 contributors will enjoy the book "The Highweather Guide to Iowa Trout Streams"; those giving at the \$250 level will receive a calendar featuring photographs of the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries; and \$500 contributors will enjoy a photo print of the Upper Iowa River. All gifts at \$100 and above will receive those benefits associated with the level below.

A special thanks goes out to Chimney Rock Canoe & Campground and Decorah Bicycles, in-kind supporters of the project.

A successful campaign will help to ensure continued water quality testing in the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries. Water quality results are reported in the *Upper Iowa News*, a newsletter published four times a year by the Northeast Iowa RC&D and are available at the Northeast Iowa RC&D website at www.northeastiowarcd.org. All donors will be recognized in the newsletter and on the website.

For more information or to make your gift to the Friends of the Upper Iowa River, please contact Northeast Iowa RC&D, Inc. at (563) 864-7112 or mail to NE Iowa RC&D, PO Box 916, Postville, IA, 52162.

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