

Upper Iowa River Watershed

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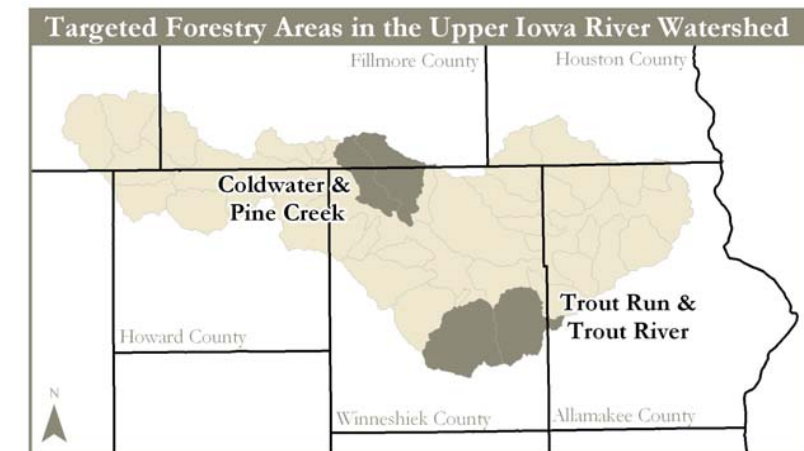
UIRWA Secures Funding for Targeted Projects

Recent efforts have been underway by the Upper Iowa River Watershed Alliance to secure funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for targeted projects in the Upper Iowa River Watershed, located in six counties across Northeast Iowa and Southeastern Minnesota. The Upper Iowa River Watershed Project, coordinated through Northeast Iowa RC&D, recently received news of tentative approval of over \$450,000 reforestation/timber stand improvement (TSI), animal waste systems, and stream corridor protection.

The Upper Iowa River Watershed Project is coordinated through Northeast Iowa RC&D. This project has been funded in part by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act).

The NRCS is also considering additional funding to be utilized through the Wetland Reserve Program in the Upper Iowa River Watershed in Howard County for targeted wetland restoration.

Four subwatersheds have been targeted for reforestation, including Trout Run, Trout River, Coldwater, and Pine. These subwatersheds are documented to be losing the greatest amount of sediment to the Upper Iowa River, and have experienced considerable forest loss and degradation of existing timber.



Funding has been secured for targeted reforestation and timber stand improvement in the Trout Run, Trout River, Coldwater, and Pine Creek subwatersheds of the Upper Iowa River Watershed.

Animal waste systems and corridor protection in and near the Upper Iowa River are a priority because of the high levels of bacteria that have been recorded in the UIR. This area is used heavily by residents and visitors for recreational purposes, and animal wastes have been identified as contributing to high fecal coliform levels in the Upper Iowa River. Funds will be primarily directed at animal waste facilities and stream bank stabilization tied to animal exclusion.

will be utilized for wetland restoration on three sites.

For more information, please call your local Soil & Water Conservation/NRCS office at the following numbers: Allamakee County (563) 568-2246, Howard County (563) 547-3040, or Winneshiek County (563) 382-4352.

GIS Analysis Reveals Areas for Wetland Restoration

Adam Kiel, GIS Specialist

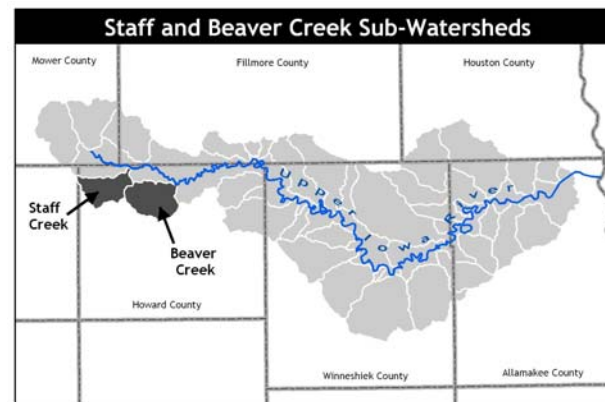
Studies at Iowa State University have revealed that restored wetlands in tile drained landscapes have the potential to remove up to 90% of nitrates in surface waters. This study prompted the Upper Iowa River Watershed Project to conduct a GIS analysis of the Upper Iowa River Watershed to identify areas for wetland restoration. The analysis, done using Geographical Information Systems (GIS), revealed that areas in the Staff and Beaver Creek watersheds, in Iowa, could have the greatest impact on lowering nitrate levels through wetland restoration.

In order for an area to fit wetland restoration parameters it must have the following characteristics; the area must consist of hydric soils, slope of the land must be less than 2.5%, current land use

must be cropland, and the area must be within 1/4 mile of a stream or river. For a restored wetland to have the greatest impact, it must be sized between 0.5% and 2% of the upstream draining area. The pre-mentioned parameters were established through research and conversations with wetland experts. Areas for wetland restoration also likely exist in western portions of the Upper Iowa River Watershed in Minnesota,

Funding has been secured to begin pursuing wetland restoration in the Staff and Beaver Creek watersheds. A similar project involving wetland restoration is currently taking place in central and

north central Iowa, in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Wetlands play a vital role in the landscape of Iowa and wetland restoration will only have positive impacts on water quality in the State.



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Trout Run Project Aims to Reduce Soil Erosion, Improve Water Quality

It has been hard to ignore the recent rain-falls which pounded our region. Reports of flooding have been in local and regional news nearly every day over the last month. While recent media reports have focused on the damage to property and danger to residents caused by the fast moving floodwaters, there is another risk posed by the rising waters, that of water pollution.

several locations.

Recent rainfall has underscored the importance of reforestation efforts currently underway in the Upper Iowa River Watershed, specifically, the Trout Run sub-watershed. The Trout Run Reforestation Project, coordinated by Richard Kittelson, has the goal of reducing soil erosion and positively impacting water quality in the Upper Iowa River Watershed. Through support and landowners incentives provided by the Iowa Farm Bureau, Winneshiek County Farm Bureau, Iowa DNR-Forestry Division, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry of the USDA Forest Service, the McKnight Foundation, and the Northeast Iowa RC&D, landowners are being provided with incentives to reforest highly erodible land, or that which has a slope of over 12%, is currently being cropped, and is based on fragile forest-formed soils. Reforesting these designated "hot spots" will effectively reduce soil erosion, not only saving valuable soil, but also improving the water quality of the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries.

For more information on the Trout Run Reforestation Project, please call Richard Kittelson at the Northeast Iowa RC&D office at (563) 864-7112.

During heavy rainfall events, tons of soil are stripped from the land and washed into the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries. The murky brown water is an obvious sign of soil loss, even to the casual observer. Unfortunately, as soil is carried into area streams and rivers, it brings with it not only damaging sediment, but also a variety of contaminants from the land.



A recent water sampling conducted by the Upper Iowa River Watershed Alliance has documented those increased contaminants. When compared to water samples drawn in late April, those drawn in late May (after a heavy rain event) indicate levels of nitrogen that were two or more times higher in many locations across the watershed. In addition, E. coli levels were considerably higher, with levels 100 or more times higher than April readings in

Friends of the Upper Iowa River

Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations that have already contributed to the Friends of the Upper Iowa River Fund. Listing includes gifts received through June 15, 2004.

- Randy & Cheryl Brenton
- Fred Carlson Co.
- Conservation Districts of Iowa
- Jon & Mary Hart
- Dave & Jane Jensen
- Paul & Pat Johnson
- Palisades Chapter
- Izaak Walton League
- Ronald R. Reis
- Larry & Deanna Stevenson

- Lime Springs Fish & Game Club
- Steve & Donna Story
- Ted Wilson
- Winneshiek County Conservation
- Jean Young

- In-Kind Sponsors*
- Decorah Bicycles
 - Chimney Rock Campground & Canoe Rental

Attention Water Recreationists!

Don't forget to pick up the Upper Iowa River Canoe Guide to make your next canoe trip more enjoyable. The guides are available for a small fee at Northeast Iowa RC&D, Decorah Park/Rec, Area canoe outfitters, Decorah Bicycles, and area tourism offices.

Become a Friend of the Upper Iowa River

The mission of the Upper Iowa River Watershed Alliance (UIRWA) is to improve the water quality in the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries, and improve the health of the Upper Iowa River Watershed. The UIRW Alliance asks for your help in continuing its mission.

Northeast Iowa RC&D and the UIRW Alliance are embarking on a campaign to raise funds from private individuals and organizations to support

Why be a Friend of the Upper Iowa River?

Our water is a precious resource. Thousands of area residents and visitors drink it, swim and canoe in it, and fish from it every year.

Unfortunately, the waters of Northeast Iowa contain contaminants, including atrazine, fecal bacteria, phosphorus, nitrogen, and high sediment. The UIRW Alliance has identified these contaminants through water testing conducted over the past several years at 30 sites across the watershed.

Continued water testing is key to successfully reducing the amount of contaminants in our water. With your support, the Upper Iowa River Watershed Alliance can supplement existing funds to conduct valuable water testing across the watershed.

Armed with water quality data, the UIRW Alliance can identify and implement projects in the watershed that will im-

prove our water quality, and will give the Alliance a better indicator of the effectiveness of existing projects.

Member Benefits

Your gift 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. All donors will be added to this mailing list and will be recognized in the newsletter. In addition, your contribution is tax deductible. Northeast Iowa RC&D is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

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 and tube 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 Decorah Bicycles and Chimney Rock Canoe Rental & Campground for their in-kind support of this project.

2004 Annual Pledge Card

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Yes! I/We would like to become a Friend of Upper Iowa River with a gift of:

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- _____ \$500
- _____ \$1000

- _____ Other Amount
- _____ Please check here if you wish to remain anonymous

Please make your check payable to Northeast Iowa RC&D, Inc. Send to: PO Box 916, Postville, IA 52162