

Sample Letter to DNR & Legislators re: *Outstanding Iowa Waters*

Dear,

Currently underway at the Iowa DNR is a rule-making package that includes protections for Iowa's very best, few remaining high quality waters.

I am writing to urge you to keep the category of Outstanding Iowa Waters in the proposed Antidegradation rules and that the 6 lakes in Dickinson County and the 32 high quality streams in NE Iowa, currently nominated in the DNR rules, maintain their designation as OIW waters in this initial rule-making.

The DNR was asked, by the Legislative Administrative Rules and Review Committee, to conduct a regulatory analysis of the costs and benefits of protecting these waters, using the OIW designation. This is what the DNR analysis concluded:

- Cost to the state of obtaining individual obtaining and complying with individual permits instead of general permits is estimated not to exceed \$50,000 per year.
- Costs related to limits on new or expanding wastewater discharges into OIWs from municipalities or industries is "not expected to be overly burdensome."
- There may also be increased economic development as a result of marketing benefits associated with waters classified as Outstanding Iowa Waters. These economic benefits might be realized by increased tourism, increased recreational uses of the waters, and protection of these resources for future generations.

In fact, Iowa tourism data demonstrates the economic benefits these high quality waters are currently providing locally and at a state level:

- Research compiled by the Travel Industry Association of America indicates tourism was a \$173.18 million dollar industry in Dickinson County (Iowa Great Lakes area) in 2005. The tourism industry creates \$25.38 million dollars in payroll affecting 1,770 employees throughout Dickinson County. It also creates \$10.41 million dollars in state tax receipts and \$3.6 million dollars in local taxes. Since 1997, according to the hotel/motel taxes collected, the Lakes-area tourism has experienced steady growth.
- The trout streams of the Driftless Area of Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois are considered a national treasure by anglers and are listed as within a critical ecosystem in need of protection and restoration by EPA. Recreational angling in the Driftless Area generates \$1.1 billion in annual economic benefits. \$647 million of this total goes directly into the local economy from spending on food, lodging travel, supplies and entertainment. The remaining \$465 million represents the indirect and induced spending referred to as the "ripple effect" from economic activity stimulated by the direct spending (source: *The Economic Impact of Recreational Angling in the Driftless Area by Trout Unlimited and NorthStar Economics, Inc.*).

In Wisconsin and Minnesota the trout season lasts only from March or April to the end of September. But in Iowa the trout season lasts all year. Every fall Iowa benefits from tourism from adjacent states coming to Iowa to fish for trout. This is an important and unique resource to protect. Unfortunately Iowa lags behind our sister states of Wisconsin and Minnesota in stream protection and restoration of these trout streams. If Iowa takes this much needed step to

recognize and protect these Outstanding Iowa Waters, it will result in increased tourism and recreational use which will greatly benefit local and state economies.

Please do all you can to be sure the DNR and the Administrative Rules and Review Committee of the Iowa Legislature know that Iowans like me want protection for these 38 Iowa gems through the Outstanding Iowa Waters designation.

Sincerely,

Your name and address

To send your letter/written comments to the Iowa DNR:

Send your letter to Adam Schnieders, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034 or by email to adam.schnieders@dnr.iowa.gov.

To send your letter/written comments to your Senator and Representative:

Find your legislators' names and contact information by going to:

<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/>.

OR...go to the Iowa Environmental Council Action Alert Center, at <http://capwiz.com/iaenvironment/home/>, where we make it easy for you to ...

- 1) find an action alert and this sample letter, which you can add to, delete sentences or personalize in any way you wish;
- 2) enter your home address to bring up your legislators' information; and
- 3) send your letter to the DNR and your state legislators.