

Outstanding Iowa Waters

Guidance for Writing Letters/Making Comments

1. It is important for you to let DNR and your legislators know that you want them to keep the category of Outstanding Iowa Waters in the proposed Antidegradation rules **AND** that you want the 6 lakes in Dickinson County and the 32 high quality streams in NE Iowa to be designated as OIW waters in this initial rule-making.
2. Talk about the importance of protecting the 38 waters proposed for designation as Outstanding Iowa Waters because they represent the very best of Iowa's few remaining high quality waters.
3. If you live in Dickinson County or NE Iowa near one of the proposed OIW waters, talk about how these high quality waters are important to your community for tourism and/or local recreational opportunities.
4. If you don't live near one of the proposed OIW waters, but visit or vacation in the area, explain how important these waters are to you and how your visits benefit the local economy.
5. Tell your story—how have you and your family used/appreciated these Outstanding Iowa Waters?

Talking Points for Lakes

1. The proposed Antidegradation rules propose to list as Outstanding Iowa Waters 6 natural lakes that comprise the Iowa Great Lakes in Dickinson County (*Proposed lakes: Big Spirit, West Okoboji, East Okoboji, Lower Gar, Upper Gar, Minnewashta*)
2. These natural lakes are considered one of Iowa's greatest natural resource treasures and provide a variety of recreational opportunities for local residents and are a tourism destination for Iowans and residents of neighboring states.
3. The two largest lakes of the chain, West Lake Okoboji and Big Spirit Lake, have the best water quality of the 6 lakes. West Lake Okoboji is one of a few deep blue water lakes in the world, and is known for its clear water. Big Spirit Lake is a shallow, sprawling prairie lake that is Iowa's largest natural lake at 5,864 acres.
4. 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.
5. Looking at tourism in general, the average travel party spending in Iowa in 2007 was \$223.66 per day on lodging, transportation, food, supplies and entertainment (*source: Iowa Tourism Office and Travel Federation of Iowa*).
6. Tourism is a \$6.3 billion industry in Iowa, employing nearly 65,000 peoples statewide and generating more than \$307 million in state taxes in 1997 (*source: Iowa Tourism Office and Travel Federation of Iowa*).

Talking Points for Streams

1. The proposed Antidegradation rules propose to list 32 stream segments in Northeast Iowa comprising a total of 112.4 miles as Outstanding Iowa Waters. This list includes 29 cold water trout streams and 3 warm waters streams.
2. Protection of the 32 streams in Northeast Iowa from further degradation by designating them as Outstanding Iowa Waters has potential economic benefits for Iowa by supporting tourist destinations with diverse forms of recreation, shopping, dining, and lodging.
3. Tourism is a \$6.3 billion industry in Iowa, employing nearly 65,000 peoples statewide and generating more than \$307 million in state taxes in 1997 (*source: Iowa Tourism Office and Travel Federation of Iowa*).
4. The proposed OIW cold water streams are spring-fed streams located in the Driftless area, a geologically and ecologically unique region located in northeastern Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. These streams support native Iowa Brook Trout as well as Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout. All of the proposed cold water streams have consistent natural reproduction of wild trout which requires consistently clean water and stream beds with suitable habitat for spawning and feeding.
5. The proposed OIW warm water streams are waters that have exemplary biological diversity, including diverse populations of fresh water mussels, some of which are threatened and endangered species.
6. 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. State, County and federal agencies as well as local landowners and private organizations have made significant investments in restoring the habitat of these cold water streams. According to an economic analysis by Trout Unlimited, approximately \$45 million has been invested in this restoration effort, in the four states, over the past 25 years.
7. 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 in recognize and protect these Outstanding Iowa Waters, it will result in increased tourism and recreational use which will greatly benefit the local economy.
8. 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.
9. Looking at tourism in general, the average travel party spending in Iowa in 2007 was \$223.66 per day on lodging, transportation, food, supplies and entertainment (*source: Iowa Tourism Office and Travel Federation of Iowa*).
10. Recreational angling in the Driftless Area of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois 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.*).