

WEEKLY

WATER WATCH

IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

There are SIX beach advisories for the week of 8/30

4 Beaches with E.Coli-Related Advisory:

Clear Lake Beach (*Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo County, IA*)

Emerson Bay Beach (*West Okoboji Lake, Milford, Dickinson County, IA*)

McIntosh Woods Beach (*Clear Lake, Ventura, Cerro Gordo County, IA*)

Prairie Rose Beach (*Harlan, Shelby County, IA*)

2 Beaches with a Microcystin-Related Advisory:

Green Valley Beach (*Creston, Union County, IA*)

Lake Keomah Beach (*Oskaloosa, Mahaska County, IA*)

Beaches exceeding the EPA recommendation for microcystin (8 micrograms/L) but not issued an advisory:

Lake Darling Beach (*Brighton, Washington County, IA*) - 9.53 µg/L

The Clean Water Act and the Agricultural Exemption

by [Alicia Vasto](#), IEC Water Policy and Advocacy Specialist

Any conversation about water quality in Iowa inevitably boils down to the fact that the largest industry in Iowa – agriculture – is not subject to most water quality regulations. Why is that? What is unique about the agriculture industry?

It all boils down to one complicated law: the Clean Water Act. Let's dig in to better understand what the Clean Water Act covers, what it doesn't, and where we stand today.

The CWA established the basic structure for regulation of pollutant discharges into the waters of the United States and gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to implement pollution control programs.

The CWA regulates point sources of pollution through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. The system requires permits for all discharges to surface waters from point sources, which are defined as "discernible, confined, and discrete" sources of pollution discharge. Examples include discharge points from factories, chemical manufacturers, wastewater treatment plants, and oil refineries. The lofty goal of this permit program, as laid out in the name, was to eliminate discharges into waterways by 1985.

Non-point sources are purportedly regulated differently because there is theoretically no "point" (i.e., a discharge pipe) at which to measure the quality of water coming from a particular source. However, we now have better information and more understanding of hydrology, watersheds, and how to target conservation practices on the landscape. The Iowa Environmental Council is exploring options to develop smart regulations that protect water quality, level the playing field for farmers, and ensure everyone has skin in the game to improve the water that we all share.

[Read the full story](#)





Summer's not over yet! Share your Labor Day weekend photos with us on Instagram @iowawaterwatch!



What's New in Iowa's Water News

[Private Well Testing Program Is Underutilized, Researchers Find](#) *(Iowa Public Radio)*

[Opinion: Polluting Farmers Should Pay](#) *(New York Times)*

[The toxic waste threat that climate change is making worse](#) *(Politico)*

[The elephants in the room: Iowa's water quality problem](#) *(The Gazette)*

[What's in our water? Report warns of growing 'invisible' crisis of pollution](#) *(The Guardian)*



Upcoming Water Events

[Leisurely Float on the Middle Raccoon](#) - Coon Rapids -
September 7

[IEC's End of Summer Beach Bash](#) - Des Moines -
September 10

[Eastern Iowa Green Infrastructure Conference](#) - Iowa
City - Sept. 19

[DMWW Citizen Water Academy](#) - Des Moines - Application
due September 20

[Iowa Outdoor Expo](#) - Des Moines - September 28 & 29

[American Water Works Association Iowa Section
Annual Conference](#) - Ames - October 22-24

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