

WEEKLY

# WATER WATCH

IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

## There are FIVE beach advisories for the week of 7/12

### **3 Beaches with E.Coli-Related Advisory:**

Backbone Beach (*Dundee, Delaware County, IA*)

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

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

### **2 Beaches with a Microcystin-Related Advisory:**

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

Lake Darling Beach (*Brighton, Washington County, IA*)

Beaches exceeding [EPA recommendation for microcystin \(8 micrograms/L\)](#) but not issued an advisory:

Lake of Three Fires Beach (*Bedford, Taylor County, IA*)

## **Riparian Buffers: An Important Practice For Limiting Nutrient Pollution**

**A riparian buffer** is an edge-of-field practice that helps protect Iowa's waterways by limiting erosion and pollution. Buffers are composed of "multiple rows of trees and shrubs adjacent to the stream with

an additional filter of perennial grasses on the outside of the trees” with increasing width with stream size. Buffers enhance wildlife habitat, reduce flooding, and stabilize soils, shores, and banks.

Unlike some other agricultural states, such as Minnesota, Iowa has no requirements for buffers. The practice is currently mentioned in Iowa’s Nutrient Reduction Strategy, but no tracking measures are in place to calculate how many buffers have been implemented or removed.



*A riparian buffer on a farm creek in Story County, Iowa.*

A 2016 Environmental Working Group report used aerial imagery to track progress in riparian buffer installation between 2011 and 2014 in eight watersheds prioritized in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. The study found that **for every acre of buffer gained in Iowa, two acres were removed**.

Comparatively, Minnesota enacted a buffer law designed to limit nutrient pollution entering waterbodies from agricultural land and ditches in 2017. Over 96% of lands covered by the law had installed a riparian buffer a year later. According to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, “riparian buffers are critical to protecting and restoring water quality and healthy aquatic life, natural stream functions and aquatic habitat due to their immediate proximity to the water.”

[Learn more about Iowa's opportunity to implement this vital practice.](#)

- Grace Holbrook  
IEC Water Program Contractor



## **Making a purchase on Prime Day?**

Prime Day is July 15 and 16 and your purchases can benefit IEC. Amazon Smiles partners with non-profit organizations through an affiliate link program. By using IEC's link, a portion of profits from your Amazon purchases will go toward IEC's efforts. [Follow our link and get started today!](#)



## Microcystin: An Alarming Trend

Over the past ten years, the number of annual swim advisories issued for microcystin, a harmful cyanobacteria created by some blue-green algae, by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has increased dramatically. [Take a look at the historical data of microcystin advisories.](#)



## Safe to Swim?

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) conducts weekly monitoring of 39 state park beaches in Iowa for microcystin and E.coli. We're tracking the IDNR weekly monitoring reports - [find out which Iowa state park beaches are currently under swim advisories.](#)



Doggos like swimming too!  
Send us your photos to be featured on @iowawaterwatch





## What's New in Iowa's Water News

### [First Email DNR Director Enters Office Amid Questions](#)

*(Iowa Public Radio)*

### [The World's Appetite is Threatening the Mississippi River](#)

*(Wall Street Journal)*

### [Iowa should adopt EPA water standards](#) *(The Gazette)*

### [EPA approves \\$1.5 million grant for Iowa wetlands projects](#) *(KIOS Omaha Public Radio)*

### [Cedar Rapids, partners to establish 6 wetlands to help with water quality, habitat on Cedar River](#) *(The Gazette)*

### [Poll shows conservation increasing, but rented land remains a barrier](#) *(Iowa State University Extension and Outreach)*

### [Kent Park lake partially drained for planting](#) *(The Gazette)*

### [For Iowa brewers, water quality is 'a really big deal'](#) *(Little Village)*



## Recent Research & Reports

### [Choosing the Right Stream](#) *(The Iowa Policy Project)*



## Upcoming Water Events

[Women, Farming, and the Future: Your Land, Your Decisions - Perry](#) - July 18

[Women for Water Happy Hour](#) - Perry - July 18

[Iowa Summer Games: Canoe Kayak](#) - Ames - July 20

[Point to Point Swim and IEC Breakfast on the Beach](#) - West Lake Okoboji - August 3

[Okoboji Blue Water Festival](#) - Arnolds Park - August 10

[River Run Garbage Grab](#) - Saylorville to Yellow Banks Park - August 16