

PADDLING IN IOWA – A CHRONOLOGY

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(Updated 20171227)

The original “Chronology of Paddling in Iowa” document was developed by Rick Dietz and Robin Fortney, and shared with attendees during the 2008 CSO Iowa Paddlesport Expo.

Please forward additions or corrections to Gregg Stark, IWTA Editor, at iowawta@gmail.com.

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1673

- In June, Louis Joliet, Father Marquette, and their French crew arrive in the area of Pike’s Peak and McGregor on the Mississippi River, after paddling & portaging via Lake Michigan, Fox River and Wisconsin River on their journey from Canada.

1700

- Approximate construction date (carbon dating) of a walnut dugout canoe, currently on display at the Montgomery County History Center in Red Oak. The canoe was discovered south of Red Oak, along the Nishnabotna River, in 1975.

1804

- Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and their 29 man crew paddle, pole, and sail up the winding Missouri River from St. Louis. On Aug 20 they pause to bury Sergeant Floyd near present-day Sioux City. Floyd was the only crew member to die (likely due to a ruptured appendix) during the 3 year, 8,000 miles “Journey of Discovery” to the Pacific and back.

1805

- While Lewis and Clark are making history on the Missouri River, 26 year old Lt. Zebulon Pike is heading up the Mississippi with 20 men and a 70 ft. keel boat. Pike was assigned several tasks, including finding sites for forts, and determining the source of the Mississippi. He identifies a fort site on 500-foot bluffs in Iowa (known today as Pike’s Peak or Pike’s Hill), but it is scrapped for a more practical site across the river in Prairie du Chien. He identifies Leech Lake as the source of the Mississippi, but the true source is later determined to be Lake Itasca.

1823

- Steamboat “Virginia” is the first to pass along Iowa’s eastern border, carrying supplies to Prairie du Chien.

1827

- Steamboat “Yellowstone” is the first on the Missouri River, sent from St. Louis by the American Fur Co.

1829

- The first recorded dam on an Iowa stream was built on the Yellow River in 1829 to refurbish Fort Crawford with newly sawn lumber for its rotting palisade. For a time, a young lieutenant named Jefferson Davis (who later led the Confederacy during the Civil War) operated the saw mill. (“Solving Dam Problems: Iowa’s 2010 Plan for Dam Mitigation”) –*paddlers soon petition for paved portage around dam ;-*.

1835

- In the summer of 1835, 1st U.S. Dragoons based at Fort Des Moines #1, near Montrose, conduct the first exploration of central Iowa, shortly after the Black Hawk Purchase of 1832, which had put the area under U.S. control. They follow the Des Moines River valley north, but somehow miss their goal of the junction of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers. They turn northeast, and eventually arrive in the area of present-day Winona, MN. After a two week rest, they return to the Raccoon Fork of the Des Moines River. After trekking north to present day Emmetsburg, they explore the Des Moines River from Emmetsburg to the Mississippi River June-August of 1835. Colonel Kearny orders Lt. Albert Lea, the group’s topographer, to paddle the river from present day Des Moines to the Mississippi, noting distances and depths. Lea resigns from the Army shortly after returning to Fort Des Moines. (In 1933, the State of Iowa opened the 200 mile “Dragoon Trail,” a signed scenic drive following the historic path of this unit, with several alternate routes,

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encompassing Fort Dodge, Webster City, Stratford, Boone, Des Moines, and the Red Rock Dam between Pella and Knoxville.)

1836

- Albert M. Lea writes a book describing the country over which the dragoons had marched in 1835. It is published with the catchy title, "Notes on the Wisconsin Territory; Particularly with Reference to the Iowa District, or Black Hawk Purchase." Rather long for a book of only 53 pages. One thousand copies are printed, but 500 are apparently lost on a steamboat on the Ohio River. Lea's book is the first use of the name "Iowa" in referring to the territory which would become the state of Iowa. While Lea named Iowa, we somehow never returned the favor, leaving it to Minnesota to name both a city and a lake in his honor.

1840s

- In the 1840s, a giant Sycamore tree, possibly 200 years old, is believed to mark the Red Rock Line, a demarcation line between tribal lands to the west of the Des Moines River and the white settlement area to the east. Known as the "Peace Tree," it was a well known meeting and trading place for white settlers and Native Americans.

1843

- Steamboat "Ione" navigates Des Moines River, lands troops & supplies at Raccoon Forks, now Des Moines.

1846

- Iowa is granted statehood Dec 28, 1846. It is now possible to paddle in the state of Iowa.

1851

- Great Flood of 1851 affects a large area of the U.S, but Iowa is the hardest hit state. Flooding stretches from Nebraska and the eastern Dakotas to the Ohio River valley, and south to the lower Mississippi River basin. Flooding from May to August is the result of record rainfall amounts across the Midwest and Plains. Up to 74.5 inches of rain falls in Iowa, a record still unbroken (long-term statewide average is 32.5 inches.) This was the first major flood for the 4 year old state of Iowa, with a low population, and little or no infrastructure designed to withstand such an event.

1854

- Mark Twain moves to Muscatine to assist his older brother Orion, who had purchased the Muscatine Journal. He later recounts his Muscatine experiences in "Life on the Mississippi." Always on the move, the young Twain soon leaves but returns in 1855 to work for Orion at his Keokuk printing business. Twain makes his speaking debut, giving an after-dinner talk Jan 17, 1856 at a printers' banquet. The Keokuk Post notes his much applauded wit and humor. Later, Twain sells his first written material to the Post.

1876

- Rockdale flood affects a very small geographic area, but is the deadliest flood in Iowa's history. Catfish Creek powers one of the area's first flour mills as it flows through Rockdale (now part of Dubuque) to the Mississippi River 2 miles downstream. Heavy rain causes Catfish Creek to swell and break the dam upstream of town at the Rockdale Mill. The resulting wall of water is around 20 feet deep and hundreds of feet wide as it sweeps into town. Around 40 people—nearly every person in town—perishes in the flood. A few survivors are found in treetops where the floodwaters had swept them. Only two buildings are left standing—the Rockdale Mill and one house. The village lost a saloon, hotel, two stores, a Post Office, several houses and a blacksmith shop.

1880

- Through friendships forged in the 1870's during canoe sailing regatta's, regional canoe club events, and the canoe cruising & exploration of America's waterways, 15 notable canoeists establish the American Canoe Association on the shores of Lake George, NY on August 3, 1880. Nathaniel H. Bishop, a prominent 19th century canoe explorer, is recognized as the 'father of the ACA'. The 1880-81 ACA Yearbook declares that the object of the ACA "shall be the promotion of canoeing." Formation of the ACA is considered the start of paddling as a recreational activity in America.

1885

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- Tacitus Hussey, Des Moines printer, writer, editor, publisher, and river-enthusiast, rows from Fort Dodge to Des Moines in 5 days. He continues to pursue and document his river adventures, including 1892 paddling in the flood in Des Moines, 1892 paddling from Humboldt to Des Moines with Mr. Weatherly, 1893 paddling from Des Moines to Keokuk with Mr. Weatherly, 1896 Des Moines Jubilee boat parade, 1897 first recorded full moon paddle on the Des Moines River. His writing continued with 1900 History of Steamboating on the Des Moines River, 1902 The Flood of 1851, and 1907 Story of the Bonaparte Dam.

1887

- Aldo Leopold (Jan 11, 1887-Apr 21, 1948) is born in Burlington, IA. As a boy, Aldo exhibits a strong interest in the outdoors, climbing the bluffs and hiking the woods near his home, and exploring the Les Cheneaux Islands in Lake Huron during family vacations. Leopold becomes a nationally-recognized American author, philosopher, scientist, ecologist, forester, conservationist, and environmentalist. His best-known book, "A Sand County Almanac," was published in 1949, shortly after his death. Leopold and his contemporary Arthur Carhart, another Iowan, were influential in the development of environmental ethics and wilderness conservation. His ethics of nature and wildlife preservation had a profound impact on the environmental movement, and was often cited in the decades-long effort leading up to the establishment of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in 1964. See ISU Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/> and Leopold Landscape Alliance (Burlington boyhood homes) <http://www.leopoldlandscape.org/>

1892

- In his book, "River Idyl," Tacitus Hussey recounts a canoe trip on the Des Moines River from Humboldt to Des Moines. On June 15, Tac and a friend board the Minneapolis & St. Louis RR with permission to put their canoes in the baggage car for the run to Humboldt. The men are using decked canoes with double bladed paddle, carrying 75 pounds of cargo. The canoes have air cushion seats, an air-tight compartment ("to float you and your cargo if capsized"), and tents to go over the masts with mosquito netting. The river downstream of Humboldt is described as, "narrow, swift, bounded by high, rocky shores, and running over a rough, rocky bed, full of rapids, the roar of which could be heard for a mile. The scenery is wild and picturesque, sometimes a rocky cliff, sometimes a spreading, rocky beach, covered with trees, vine clad, and wild roses everywhere." Tac indicates that they encountered 25 rapids between Humboldt and Fort Dodge, some of which were ¼ mile long with turbulent waters that "tossed and plunged" canoes like corks. There are many references to finding debris below each community, including nail kegs, cart wheel, horse collar, boy's wool hat, chair in tree, turtle caught in log jam, broken bottles, and playing cards.
- Arthur H. Carhart (Sep 18, 1892-Nov 27, 1978) is born in Mapleton, IA, goes on to become a national leader of the early 20th century conservation movement, especially in advocating wilderness areas. After surveying the Superior National Forest in the Quetico-Superior lake region in 1921, he recommends only limited development and becomes a strong advocate for wilderness recreation for that roadless area. Carhart later writes that "there is no higher service that the forests can supply to individual and community than the healing of mind and spirit which comes from the hours spent where there is great solitude." Secretary of Agriculture William H. Jardine signed a plan to protect the Boundary Waters area in 1926, and it was dedicated as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in 1964, with it finally being declared a wilderness area in 1978. Carhart graduated from Iowa State University in 1916, earning ISU's first degree in landscape gardening (later landscape architecture), and became the first landscape architect for the National Forest Service. Aldo Leopold visited Carhart in Colorado in 1919, and the two Iowans became kindred spirits of the wilderness movement. Carhart served as a trustee of the J. N. "Ding" Darling Foundation.

1896

- When the city of Des Moines and Polk County celebrate their Semi-Centennial or Jubilee Day, local patriot, author, paddler, and "river enthusiast" Tacitus Hussey and his wife lead a boat parade consisting of eight canoes, forty row boats, and seven steamers from Center Street Dam upstream to Union Park. Thousands of people line the banks of the river to witness the parade.

1917

- The 37th Iowa General Assembly creates the State Board of Conservation, later renamed the Conservation Commission. The commission's primary duties are to make recommendations for acquirement of land for state parks and administer the parks. On July 1986, the Conservation Commission, the Department of

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Water, Air and Waste Management, Geological Survey and the part of the Energy Policy Council were combined into the newly created Department of Natural Resources.

1932

- In January, the nation's first Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit is established at Iowa State University thanks to the efforts of J.N. "Ding" Darling. Dr. Paul Errington, who was mentored by Aldo Leopold at the University of Wisconsin, joins ISU as leader of the wildlife unit in July. (A similar unit to study fish populations was created in 1941.) Errington was a zoology professor at ISU from 1932 to 1962, recognized as an international authority on the phenomena of predation and automatic mechanisms of population regulation. He spent significant time in a canoe performing field research for his publication "Muskrat Populations," which received the ISU Press award.

1945

- The very first aluminum canoe, a 13-footer, is produced at the Grumman aircraft plant in Bethpage, Long Island. By the end of World War II Grumman is producing a line of 13', 15', 17', 18', 19', and 20' canoes.

1960

- In May, two Iowa State University students leave Ames for their homes in Burlington, via canoe (one of the earliest known inland river voyages). Mike Carstensen and Bruce Wyborny expect the trip to take about five days. Reason for the trip is "to relieve tension following final examinations." The duo starts on Squaw Creek near ISU and continue down the Skunk River to the Mississippi - roughly 225 miles.

1969

- As the new Red Rock Reservoir fills, the "Peace Tree," a giant 325 year-old Sycamore, nearly disappears beneath the waves. The ancient tree was a well known meeting and trading place for white and Native Americans.

1973

- ISU engineering students build their first concrete canoe, the USS Ekberg, for a competition at Purdue University. The 400 lb. canoe is not completed in time for the competition, so instead debuts during ISU's VEISHEA festival.

1977

- Saukenuk Paddlers is established by a couple of competitors in the Maquoketa River Canoe Trail Race. See <http://saukenuk.org/>

Late 1970's (?)

- Iowa Conservation Commission produces the 14 page "Iowa Canoe Trips" guide in newsprint – also published in the Waterloo Courier (1977). In the 1990s, the same information took the form of pamphlets and, around 2000, was followed by the 60-page "Iowa Canoe Guide" with Jeff Holmes' photo on the cover.

1982

- On Jun 19, Governor Robert Ray joins 100 people for the first annual "Governor's Canoe Float," a highlight of "Iowa Rivers Month," covering 5 miles of the Boone River near Stratford. "Unfortunately, many Iowans don't recognize the importance of the state's rivers," noted Gov. Ray. "We just take them for granted." The Boone was chosen for the float because a 25 mile stretch from Webster City to the river's mouth is the focus of a new Iowa Conservation Commission "Protected Water Areas" program. It is believed that the last Governor's Canoe Float occurred in 2000, again on the Boone, when Lt. Governor Sally Peterson (standing in for Gov. Vilsack) paddled her canoe to the Boone Waterworks access.

1983

- MADRAC, the "Mississippi Annual Downstream Adventure by Canoe," is organized in 1983, by Sue Smith of Burlington, when five cities between Dubuque and Burlington are celebrating their sesquicentennials. The 7-day event covers 160+ miles, often between Dubuque and Burlington, but evolves to include other river ports. Drawing 40 canoes its first year, MADRAC grows to 100 canoes and 200 paddlers, with a possible peak of 400 paddlers, predominantly canoeists. A Taiwanese team dragon boat participates in the 1985 MADRAC, Sue Smith "gets the bug," forms the American Dragon Boat Association, and buys two dragon

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boats which she leases to race organizers. *Research identifies references to a 14th MADRAC in 1996, but we would welcome further info on the final chapter of this event.* iowawta@gmail.com

1986

- In July, Iowa's Conservation Commission, Department of Water, Air and Waste Management, Geological Survey and Energy Policy Council are combined into the newly created Department of Natural Resources.

1988

- Robert Waller, author of "The Bridges of Madison County" inadvertently helps create the annual Upper Cedar River Float. Waller had recounted the joys of paddling the Shell Rock River in a 1987 essay in the Des Moines Register. St. Ansgar's Stan Walk sees an opportunity to meet Waller and possibly create economic development for Mitchell County. Waller and Walk spend a day scouting along the river, and Walk sets to work recruiting a volunteer committee, planning riverside food stands and entertainment. Over 100 canoes participate in 1988 and 1989, but a high water alert reduces 1990 to 20 canoes. Jim Hughes, president of the Floyd County Izaak Walton League during the first float, felt obligated to participate, but soon becomes a fan of the event's ability to help folks "mellow out." In 1994, Jim marries Laura, and her first float is also her honeymoon cruise. When Stan Walk, never a paddler, wants to step down as event leader, Jim and Laura reluctantly step up to ensure the continuation of an annual float loved by them and their friends. This very-informal event usually covers about 60 miles, shuttling around dams and from one camping area to another. (Above info summarized from an article in "The Iowan.")

1989

- Based on feedback from a fall 1988 sample issue, Jeff Holmes publishes the magazine, "Canoeing Iowa." Within a few years, it grows to almost 1,000 subscribers.

1992

- In May, Jeff Holmes opens CanoeSport Outfitters, "Where Paddling Is a Priority," in Indianola as the first paddlesport shop in Iowa. CSO begins with only 600 square feet, expands in 1995 and 1998 to nearly 20,000 square feet, and in 1996 acquires the concession business at Lake Ahquabi State Park.

1993

- The Great Flood of 1993 is considered to be one of the most defining natural disasters in Iowa history. Widespread flooding results in 17 fatalities, 10,000 evacuations, 21,000 damaged homes, \$2.7 billion in damage, and each of Iowa's 99 counties being declared a Federal Disaster Area. During the summer of 1993 some areas received rain each day for 130 consecutive days, some flooding more than five times.

1995

- Jeff Holmes publishes final issue of "Canoeing Iowa" magazine in March.
- CanoeSport Outfitters responds to paddler & industry trends, begins selling kayaks.
- First "Great River Rumble," (GRR) is organized by nonprofit Midwest River Expeditions, paddling the Mississippi River from Prairie du Chien, WI to Analusia, IL. GRR becomes an annual weeklong paddling/camping event, with approximately 100 canoes/kayaks and up to 200 paddlers covering 100+ miles on the Mississippi and its tributaries. GRR has visited most of the Iowa towns along the Mississippi, and included stretches of the Des Moines River in 2007 and the Turkey River in 2015.

1996

- Gerry (Gigs) Rowland purchases his first kayak and begins a quest to paddle the length of the Des Moines River. Limited by a lack of shuttle partners with a similar interest, he devises a unique self-shuttle system—two vehicles, each with a roof rack, one towed by the other. He becomes the father of Iowa Water Trails, thanks to the "Floods of '93!" See www.desmoinesriver.org/visionquest.htm.

1997

- CSO hosts its first Iowa Paddlesport Expo in Indianola. The Expo is a hit, expanding and evolving over the coming years to become a premier annual event for Iowa paddlers, providing the latest in boats and gear, travel and safety education, information exchange, and a statewide social "homecoming."
- Robin Fortney founds the Des Moines Canoe Club immediately following a meeting of great minds at the 1997 Paddlesport Expo. Members want more! Robin publishes a quarterly newsletter, initiates an email

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distribution list, begins leading paddling trips, and suggests a mission statement that includes sharing information, promoting paddling opportunities & paddlesport safety, and encouraging care of our aquatic resources. The original group includes an enthusiastic contingent of paddlers from Nebraska. After Rob Tull asks, “What about kayaks?” and noting that the membership includes people beyond Des Moines, the group morphs into Central Iowa Paddlers. CIP quickly gains and has maintained the largest membership of any Iowa paddling organization (166 in 2007). See <http://centraliowapaddlers.org/> Activities include leading paddling trips, supporting river stewardship activities and providing skill building opportunities, etc.

1998

- Jim Colbert, ISU biology professor, initiates the Skunk River Navy to get college students on the water for hands-on river biology lessons and cleanup activities. Friends and fellow paddlers are invited to serve as SRN admirals.

1999

- Dave Kraemer, then editor of the Ottumwa Courier, initiates the River Ripple, a paddling event on the Des Moines River in Wapello County. The event, which drew more than 200 paddlers to a single event, ran for three years under Dave’s leadership. It continued for a year under YMCA leadership and another year or two under Big Brothers Big Sisters leadership.

2000

- Greg Vitale suggests CIP hold a season planning meeting in January to schedule paddling trips for the year. 40 paddlers converge on Robin Fortney’s house, an historic event as it’s believed to be the largest gathering of paddlers in Iowa history!
- Villages of Van Buren organization hosts first “Canoe Van Buren” event on the second full weekend of July. On Saturday, paddlers launch at Selma, break at Douds, lunch at Austin Park and complete 22 river miles at the Keosauqua takeout. On Sunday, following a Keosauqua Lions pancake breakfast, paddlers launch from Keosauqua, break at Bentonsport, lunch at Bonaparte, and complete 19 river miles at Farmington. A memorable feature of the event is the literal “red carpet” at each landing, with volunteers to assist paddlers and carry boats. Participation peaks at 127 in 2004, but the event is canceled several years by high water, and is finally dropped after the high water cancellation in 2010. Organizers credit Gerry Rowland with suggesting this event on the lower Des Moines River.
- CIP initiates the Armchair Paddlers Series to gather paddlers through the winter months at Canoesport Outfitters for programs about paddling, boats and other issues of interest.
- Des Moines River Water Trail Committee, including “Gigs” and the then unknown “Gritty” Dave Kraemer, “identify access points, develop a universal water trail logo, and promote activities on the river”. At Gigs’ urging, the state of Iowa establishes the Des Moines River Water Trail. The trail dedication is held in conjunction with the Governor’s Annual Canoe Float, and participants rode the Boone and Scenic Valley RR out to Fraser for the launch.

2001

- Greg Vitale & Rick Dietz found Skunk River Paddlers as the Ames contingent spin-off from CIP. They become an active core of paddlers promoting environmental advocacy and community involvement. Yahoo Group members total 84 in 2008. See www.skunkriverpaddlers.org.
- Prairie Rapids Paddlers is established in Cedar Falls. Activities include promoting Iowa whitewater instruction and skill-building. Yahoo Group members total 66 in 2008. Formal organization fades, but Ty Graham and other remaining informal members are instrumental in the creation of whitewater parks at Charles City and Manchester.

2002

- Nate Hoogeveen forms the Iowa Whitewater Coalition. Activities include promoting Iowa whitewater instruction and skill-building, and the Reconnect the Rivers program to focus on dam safety. In 2006, Don Probst partners with IWC to initiate the Green Rivers Team, a river cleanup program. Yahoo Group members total 198 in 2008.
- Iowa Water Trail Association is formed at the 2002 Iowa PaddleSport Expo. More than 150 people signed on to the mailing list!
- CIP begins a partnership with Izaak Walton League to conduct annual River Run Garbage Grab (R2G2) cleanup events on the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers in the Des Moines area.

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- CIP responds to a request from IDNR to cut dangerous snags out of the Upper Iowa River after a paddler breaks his neck. CIP offers to do a river cleanup if IDNR will challenge local outfitters to handle the chainsaws. IDNR evolves the event into the annual Upper Iowa River cleanup event held each fall, drawing paddlers from around the state.
- Gigs Rowland becomes the first paddler member on the Federal Recreational Trail advisory committee, representing water trail users. His name was put forward by representatives of the DNR because of his work on the Des Moines River water trail. Gigs worked with the Van Buren Trails Committee to submit a successful grant for a water trail in Van Buren County in 2002. Water trail grants were also given to Story County, Hardin County, Boone County, and Webster County over the next several years. Gigs retires from the Federal Recreational Trails committee in 2005. Peter Komendowski begins serving as the water trails representative in 2005.

2003

- Iowa Paddling and Camping Forum, a small but very popular online community, launches in 2003. Later, when told that the site would be dropped, IPC forum members insist that it is the greatest discovery since rotomolding, and follow Brian Stroener to www.paddlingiowa.com in January 2005.
- Skunk River Paddlers (SRP) begins an informal partnership with the Iowa Arboretum by turning its 3rd Annual Ice Breaker Paddle into the Pancake Paddle - an example of paddlers helping out other causes.
- 1st Annual Project AWARE! Inspired after hearing Chad Pregracke, IOWATER Director Brian Soenen somehow convinces the IDNR that it would be a good idea to sponsor a week-long river clean-up. It was a great idea.

2004

- Robin hands over the reins of CIP to a board, but continues to be involved as an executive board member. It now takes 9 people to do what she had been doing almost single-handedly for seven years! Board includes representatives from SRP and IWC.
- Nate Hoogeveen writes & publishes "PADDLING IOWA, 96 Great Trips By Canoe and Kayak" aka "the bible" or "the good book!"
- "Paddle for the Presidency," a voter registration effort aimed at those age 18-25, is organized by 16 recent graduates of Colorado College. One of the leaders of the group is Doug Vilsack, son of Iowa Governor Vilsack. The group paddles 10 canoes from Lake Itasca to New Orleans from June 1 through August 21, with July rally stops at Dubuque, Quad Cities, and Burlington. The message is non partisan, in fact the 16 organizers engage in spirited campfire discussion from their right- and left-leaning perspectives.
- Nate Hoogeveen and Greg Vitale propose a boat registration fee increase that gains the support of the paddling community following a survey of CIP, IWC, PRP [need more detail on these guys], SRP and Iowa Water Trails Association members - about 500 paddlers!

2005

- In January, Nate Hoogeveen and Brian Stroener launch www.paddlingiowa.com, but you still need to buy the book!
- In March, Mike Delaney and other supporters meet in the Dallas Center Library to organize the Raccoon River Watershed Association (RRWA), a group of citizens dedicated to the stewardship of the Raccoon River, preserving and enhancing the river and its watershed so that citizens can safely enjoy swimming, fishing, canoeing, hunting, hiking, bird watching and other outdoor recreational activities."
- In June, motivated by a need for paddling partners, Pam Wolter organizes Cedar Valley Paddlers (CVP), with support from Darrin Siefkin of CrawDaddy Outdoors. CVP had 12 members its first year, and has maintained 40 since then. The club provides recreational opportunities to adults 18+, scheduling over 17 events each year in NE Iowa and SE MN, plus a national or international trip every other year. CVP participates in informal turtle & mussel surveys on select trips, along with mussel rescues and other volunteer efforts.
- September; Darrin Siefkin founds CrawDaddy Outdoors with purchase of inventory from Shell Rock Hardware, which had operated since 1985. The business operates in Shell Rock for 6 weeks while remodeling a store in Waverly. In November; CrawDaddy Outdoors opens doors at 107 E. Bremer Ave in Waverly, catering to paddlers and other outdoor enthusiasts. See www.crawdaddyoutdoors.com.
- New legislation is signed increasing canoe & kayak registration fees by \$1/year, providing funds to support a water recreation coordinator and advisory council. Boat registration fees had not increased for more than 20 years and recent efforts to raise them had failed. "The support of paddlers made a huge difference." Nate

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Hoogeveen takes the job as program coordinator. New DNR position quickly leads to additional staff & new IDNR Iowa River Programs.

2006

- IOWATER begins offering C.L.E.A.R. grants to support the growing river cleanup culture or, more specifically, to ensure that trophy trash gets recycled! It leads to events like LWRC, Dragoon River Romp in Boone, River Run Garbage Grab in Des Moines, CREG, etc.)
- Steve Anderson and friends conceive the Iowa PaddleSports Association.
- Nate organizes the 1st Iowa Rivers Revival conference following a joint meeting of the IWC and CIP Boards. Following the conference, a steering committee organizes the Iowa Rivers Revival organization to advocate for and promote Iowa rivers and encourage river stewardship and community celebrations.
- Nate Hoogeveen organizes the Iowa Water Trails program. IDNR provides grants to agencies/communities for water trail developments and engages paddlers to serve on a water trail grant advisory committee.
- With John Wenck's leadership, IWC provides assistance & leadership to establish a portage trail & dam signage at the Boone Waterworks Dam, after an ISU student dies at the dam.

2007

- Iowa DNR publishes the Iowa StreamKeepers Volunteer Handbook, prepared by IOWATER and Keepers of the Land Volunteer Programs. The handbook, supported in part by a CLEAR grant from REAP-CEP and grants from Keep Iowa Beautiful and the Iowa DNR, provides guidance for organizing, marketing, and executing effective and safe river cleanups.
- CIP and IWC join forces with the Izaak Walton League-Des Moines Chapter to expand the annual River Run Garbage Grab (R2G2) to include land trail cleanup. The group partners with riparian land managers including the Corps of Engineers, IDNR, Polk County Conservation and City of Des Moines, as well as Des Moines Rowing Club, to lead the event. 200 people show up including 75 paddlers; 24 tons of trash are removed, and 10 tons are recycled!
- IRR initiates an annual "River Town of the Year Award" to recognize Iowa towns and cities for outstanding efforts to reclaim river-fronts as anchors for economic development, recreation, and good ecological practices (such as dam removal or modification, river restoration, etc.).
- John Wenck organizes an adult education course in paddling through the City of Des Moines and engages Jeff Holmes and area paddlers to teach the course.
- IWC, with the support of other groups and legislators like Rep. Donovan Olson, helps establish legislation creating a \$200,000 cost share fund for low head dam mitigation.

2008

- January; Indian Creek Nature Center, in Cedar Rapids, hosts its first "Paddle Day," which becomes a popular annual event, and a temporary cure for eastern Iowans suffering cabin fever.
- Sticks In the Water paddlers group is organized in Cedar Rapids, providing a network for paddlers in Johnson, Jones, & Linn Counties. SIW debuts at Indian Creek Nature Center's first Paddle Day in January. Monthly email newsletter soon exceeds 200 subscribers. Organizers: Gregg Stark, Nick Gaeta, Pam Stalnaker, Kevin Stalnaker, Tom Sabotta.
- Meeting of paddling enthusiasts is held, during the annual Iowa Paddlesport Expo in February, to discuss forming a statewide paddling or "umbrella" organization for the state's various paddling-related groups. Attendance is good, brainstorming of purpose and role is lively. A committee is formed and meets several times, but the effort soon dissolves.
- May/June; Iowa Flood of 2008, while impacting a smaller area for a shorter time period than the Flood of 1993, is more focused and intense. Flooding occurs along many eastern Iowa rivers, particularly in the Cedar and Iowa River basins. New record river levels are set, 85 of Iowa's 99 counties are declared Federal Disaster Areas, damage is estimated at \$10 billion, 40,000 people are affected, but with only one fatality.
- John Wenck and Rick Dietz initiate IWC's "eBay for Osprey" program, resulting in \$800 to help fund IDNR's osprey reintroduction efforts as an outgrowth of CIP's Armchair Paddling Series.
- Iowa Rivers Revival hires a part-time program director, Roz Lehman!

2009

- March; Following floods of 2008, CrawDaddy Outdoors opens doors of beautifully renovated building at 207 E. Bremer Ave in Waverly, with expanded offerings of kayaks, backpacking and camping gear. See www.crawdaddyoutdoors.com

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- IRR initiates River Rascal program to connect kids and rivers. The program teaches kids about river values, stewardship, & biology, and teaches them to paddle canoes with assistance from experienced adults.
- Iowa paddler volunteers assume responsibility for a disabled veteran kayaking event during the Veterans Administration Annual TEE Tournament near Iowa City. A first effort in 2008 utilized a contract organization from Boston, but was deemed too costly and had a limited staff. The initial volunteer effort served 28 Vets in 2009. Support from Saukenuk Paddlers, Sticks In the Water, and Seatasea Watersports helped the project grow to serve 50-75 Vets annually. By recruiting volunteers and loaned boats and gear, the group continues to provide an introduction to the joy of paddling at no cost to the Vets or the VA.

2010

- In late April, John Craun, "That Crazy Kayaker" paddles 400 miles, coast to coast on the Des Moines River, to raise \$75,000 for the paddle-in Hickory Ridge Campsite project on Lake Red Rock. Craun arrives in Keokuk, where the Des Moines joins the Mississippi, completing the run in just over 7 days.
- First Iowa Trails Summit is held June 18-19, organized by Iowa's Federal Recreational Trails Advisory Committee, with 27 supporting organizations & sponsors. Annual event provides education, information exchange, and encouragement for those involved with biking, hiking, snowmobiling, equestrian, off-road, and water trails.
- Inaugural Great Iowa River Race is held on Iowa River at Iowa City.
- Quad Cities host first annual "Floatzilla" event, a Guinness World Record attempt to gather the largest flotilla of kayaks and canoes. A new record is not set, but the event becomes an annual celebration of paddling, food, and fun.
- The Iowa Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund Amendment is on the Nov 2, 2010 ballot, and is approved by 62.57% of voters. The constitutional amendment provides that the next time the Iowa Legislature approves a sales tax increase, the measure would allow 3/8ths of one cent to be used in support of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. This would establish permanent revenue, estimated at about \$150 million annually, for natural resources and outdoor recreational programs in the state. As of January 2017, the Legislature had not taken any action which would actually fund the Trust Fund.

2011

- Inaugural Treetown Adventure Race is held on the Winnebago River in Forest City.
- IRR develops the award-winning Master River Steward program, an adult education program that teaches watershed awareness, paddling & navigating skills, river & stream dynamics, aquatic habitat, water quality & water monitoring, and policies related to floodplains, river protection and restoration, with support from Dr. James Pease and a REAP grant. The intent is to build a network of river advocates.
- Charles City hosts the grand opening of Iowa's first whitewater park in July. The park includes 3 features along a ¾ mile run through downtown Charles City, with tracks for paddlers of all skill levels, and accommodating tubers as well.
- Mel Schlacter, et al, organize Iowa River Friends, a volunteer group with a mission to protect, improve, and enjoy the Iowa River watershed. IRF soon has members along the entire length of the Iowa River. IRF evolved in Iowa City from informal gatherings and environmental education events for adults and kids (including "Rivercall" from 2000-2005).

2012

- Nate Hoogeveen publishes "Way Revised--PADDLING IOWA, 128 Outstanding Journeys By Canoe and Kayak," based on the original 2004 "best-seller."
- CanoeSport Outfitters begins stocking & selling Stand Up Paddleboards (SUPs) as the newest paddling and fitness craze takes hold in Iowa.
- Dubuque Water Trail, with 11 miles on the Mississippi and 5 miles on Catfish Creek, receives state-designation in June.
- Inaugural "Charles City Challenge: WhiteWater Weekend" is held June 15-17. Event is anticipated to become a premier annual whitewater event which will attract top canoe, kayak, and stand up paddleboard talent from across the United States and Canada. Events include: kayak rodeo, kayak down river race, kayak boater cross, kayak best trick, SUP down river race, SUP attainment, SUP best surf, canoe down river race, and canoe best surf.
- New Iowa Water Trails Association (IWTA) is created, with newsletter edited by Gregg Stark. IWTA publishes its first free, monthly email IWTA Newsletter in July, utilizing word-of-mouth and newsletter sharing to grow to over 400 subscribers by the end of the year.

PADDLING IN IOWA – A CHRONOLOGY

- Lizard Creek Water Trail, running 13 miles through Webster County, celebrates IDNR-designation in July.

2013

- Iowa Legislature establishes an Iowa Rivers and Waterways Interim Study Committee to consult with interested parties in considering options for restoring the quality of Iowa's rivers and waterways.
- City of Elkader creates the Elkader Water Park on the Turkey River, with three distinct features--the 22' wide "Gobbler" Wave, a High-Flow Wave Structure Boulder Island, and Fish/Canoe Passage. Different flow rates create a range of challenges for paddlers of all abilities.
- October; "Wild River Academy-Paddle Forward," an ecology & sustainability studies group led by Natalie Warren, stops in Burlington for a "Leopold Roots of the Land Ethic" campfire talk, while paddling from Minnesota to Louisiana. Warren was the first woman to paddle from Minnesota to the Hudson Bay.

2014

- Sticks In the Water Paddlers (SIW) publishes its final monthly email newsletter. Editor Gregg Stark notes the recently-emailed SIW 2014 Paddler Planning Calendar, and refers readers to the SIW Yahoo Group and the Iowa Water Trails Association Newsletter.
- Iowa Water Trails Association (IWTA) Website <http://iowawatertrails.org/> is launched in June. The site provides info and helpful links for paddlers and those with other interests related to Iowa Water Trails, an Events calendar, and a link to subscribe to the free monthly email IWTA Newsletter.

2015

- Iowa DNR and partners develop a River Restoration Strategy to coordinate and improve river restoration efforts, including a draft method for evaluating stream mitigation plans; group assembles tools and techniques that support river restoration.
- June; A Grand Opening is held for a new Whitewater Park in downtown Manchester. The project includes removal of a 9' dam, creation of 6 drops & pools, expansion of walking/biking trails, and beautification of the riverfront.
- September; Retailer Seatasea Watersports in Cedar Rapids closes its doors. For 15 years, Ken & Danette Kremer had provided sales, service, & training for enthusiasts of SCUBA diving, triathlon, canoeing & kayaking.
- October; Ecology class led by Professor Joe Underhill, from Augsburg College in Mississippi, stops in Burlington for a Leopold House tour. The group was canoeing from Minnesota to Louisiana.

2016

- Iowa Rivers Revival hires first full time director, Molly Hanson.
- IRR offers a Master River Steward Program "Train the Trainer" workshop to expand this program to more communities across the state.
- IRR creates the "Iowa Low-head Dam Modification Success Stories" booklet documenting stories and details of 13 successful low-head dam modifications in towns across Iowa, including 12 since 2010. See IRR's Web site for a copy of the booklet.
- Iowa Water Trails Association (IWTA) Newsletter surpasses 1300 subscribers.

2017

- IRR offers its Master River Steward Program at 6 locations across Iowa.
- New Copy???
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PADDLING IN IOWA – A CHRONOLOGY

Iowa Rivers Revival “River Town of the Year” Awards

2007 Webster City, Boone River
2008 Elkader, Turkey River
2009 Coon Rapids, Raccoon River
2010 Cedar Falls, Cedar River
2011 No Award
2012 Charles City, Cedar River
2013 Central City, Wapsipinicon River, and Dubuque, Mississippi River
2014 Decorah, Upper Iowa River
2015 Council Bluffs, Missouri River, and Manchester, Maquoketa River
2016 Clinton, Mississippi River
2017 Clive, Walnut Creek

RESEARCHING:

- IowaDNR Water Trail Designation Dates.
- Significant dam removals and dates.
- C.L.E.A.R = acronym for ???
- Paddle-in campsites established, Red Rock, Yellow River???
- Maquoketa Canoe Trail (Possible old Boy Scout trail)???
- Inkipaduta Canoe Trail???

LIST OF ACRONYMS & ORGANIZATIONS

CIP Central Iowa Paddlers
CLEAR ???
CREG Cedar River Environmental Group
CSO Canoesport Outfitters
CVP Cedar Valley Paddlers
DRR Dragoon River Romp
ICC Iowa Conservation Commission (forerunner to IDNR)
ICNC Indian Creek Nature Center
IDNR Iowa Department of Natural Resources
IEC Iowa Environmental Council
IPC Iowa Paddling & Camping
IRF Iowa River Friends
IRR Iowa Rivers Revival
IWC Iowa Whitewater Coalition
IWTA Iowa Water Trails Association
LWRC Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup
PRP Prairie Rapids Paddlers
R2G2 River Run Garbage Grab
RRWA Raccoon River Watershed Association
Saukenuk Paddlers
SIW Sticks In the Water Paddlers
SRN Skunk River Navy
SRP Skunk River Paddlers
WT Water Trail