

22nd Annual Iowa Project AWARE Summary Statistics Cedar and Shell Rock Rivers, July 13-18, 2025

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22nd Annual Iowa Project AWARE • July 13-18, 2025 • Cedar and Shell Rock Rivers • T38 Access to West Idlewild Campground (Cedar River), West Idlewild Campground to Riverside Park Access (Cedar River), Strand Park Access to Boulder Park Boat Ramp (Shell Rock River), Nora Springs Access to Rockford Access (Shell Rock River), Rockford Access to Tosanak Recreation Area (Shell Rock River)

- **River Miles** – 53.2
- **Volunteers** – 263
 - Average volunteers per day – 171
 - Age Range – 5 to 83 years
 - River Cleanup Rookies – 78 (28%)
 - In addition to Iowa, volunteers came from Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.
- **Sponsors** – 97
- **Total Trash & Recyclables** – 20,775 lbs (10.4 tons)
 - Recyclables – 20,700 lbs (10.3 tons; 99.6% recycled)
 - Tires – 140 (7,055 lbs; 3.5 tons)
 - Scrap Metal – 9,702 lbs (4.8 tons)
 - Misc. recycling (appliances; burnable; plastic; cardboard; pop cans; glass; compost) – 3,803 lbs. (1.9 tons)
 - Trash – 75 lbs. (0 tons; 0.4% landfilled)

2025 Iowa Project AWARE Volunteer and Sponsor Summary Stats

- Paddled and removed trash from 23 miles of the Cedar River from the T38 Access to West Idlewild Campground, and West Idlewild Campground to Riverside Park Access. Then transitioned to removing trash from 30.2 miles of the Shell Rock River from Strand Park East Access to Boulder Park Boat Ramp, Nora Springs Access to Rockford Access, and Rockford Access to Tosanak Recreation Area.
- Alternative plans were implemented for Monday and Tuesday due to high river levels, we were set to be on the Winnebago River, but had to pivot to the Cedar River.
- 263 participants registered for the event
- Daily average number of participants on the river – 171. Number of volunteers on the water each day: Monday (190), Tuesday (189), Wednesday (176), Thursday (156), and Friday (133).
- In addition to Iowa, volunteers came from Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.
- 75 (28%) of volunteers were first year volunteers; 9 volunteers were recognized for their 5th year on Iowa Project AWARE; 8 participants were recognized for being on Project AWARE 10 years, and 1 participants were recognized for 15 years, and 4 participants were recognized for 20 years.
- Volunteers ranged in age from 5 to 83; 55 (21%) of this year's participants were 18 years or younger; 13 (5%) were 10 years of age or younger; 56 (21%) of the volunteers were age 62 or older.
- 110 participants were registered for all five days on the river.
- Participants included 28 members of the Conservation Corps of Iowa, including 5 as Iowa Project AWARE staff for the week.
- A total of 97 sponsors made this event possible through both monetary and in-kind donations. Grants supporting this year's event included: Bertha Stebens Charitable Foundation, Cargill, Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation, Floyd County Community Foundation, Hanson Family Foundation, Hy-Vee, ITC Midwest Charitable Giving Program, Jaspers Family Foundation Fund of Worth County, Kinney-Linstrom Foundation, Kwik Trip Inc., MidAmerican Energy Foundation, Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant Program.
- 28% of participants identified as beginners to paddling; 39% intermediate; and 25% as experienced, 5% did not answer.

Click the following to enjoy photos from the 2025 Iowa Project AWARE river cleanup on the Cedar and Shell Rock Rivers.

- [Google Photo Album](#)

In-kind sponsor contributions included the following:

1. Donated camping and use of park facilities
2. Cut resistant gloves
3. Use of canoes, lifejackets, paddles, trailers
4. Hydration and nutrition supplies for week
5. Shuttle location parking
6. Educational programs
7. Use of trucks and dump trailers
8. Staff for the event
9. Zanfel poison ivy cream
10. Recycling of tires
11. Hand sanitizer

- 12. Recycling bags
- 13. Donated shower facilities
- 14. Local planning committee

- 15. Storm shelters
- 16. Website management

2025 Iowa Project AWARE Sponsors

Platinum Paddle Sponsors

Big Grove for Good • Cargill • Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation • Floyd County Community Foundation • Floyd County Conservation Board • Greg and Cheryl Long • Hanson Family Foundation • Holthues Trust • Iowa DNR River Programs • Koch Fertilizer, LLC • Linn County Conservation • MidAmerican Energy Foundation • N-Compass, Inc. • Nick and Maureen Gaeta • Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant Program • State Hygienic Lab at the University of Iowa • Steve and Renee Schaaf • Zanfel

Golden Yoke Sponsors

Ansell Protective Products • Bertha Stebens Charitable Foundation • Diane and Ken Birt • Hy-Vee, Inc. • Iowa Whitewater Coalition • ITC Midwest • Jaspers Family Foundation Fund of Worth County • Jeffrey Eaton • Kinney-Linstrom Foundation • Mark Bohner • Zimmerman Buildings, Inc.

Silver Stern Sponsors

Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines • Charlie Becker • Jeff and Christianna White • Steve Simpson • Story County Conservation • Toppling Goliath Brewing Co.

River Steward Sponsors

Angel Shawda • B4-Brands • Eco Lips • First Security Bank and Trust • Jim Urban • John, Shawnna, Aaron, Katelynn Larison, and Madisen Hoffschneider • Kwik Trip Inc. • Lynette Seigley • Mason City Parks and Recreation Board • One Love LLC/La Calle • Paul Clark • Rick Dietz • Stantec

River Rescue Sponsors

Can Shed LLC • Cedar Valley Paddlers Club • Cindy Barrowcliff • Colin Gordon • David and Lisa Bluder • Elizabeth Garst Fund • Emily Hesse • Fossil & Prairie Conservation Foundation • Harlan Jesse • Heidi Koenig • Jacqueline Schmitt • Jeff Westphal • Joe Artz • Kent Precision Foods Group (KPGF) • Laura Merrick • Linda Applegate • Lisa and Randy Howell • Martin St. Clair • Michael McGinn • Print Group USA • Randy White • Rebecca Fenelon • Richard Worm • Rodney Schreck • Ross Soifer • Ryan Clark • Sarah McKeever • Shaun Ahern • Skunk River Paddlers • Steve Ehlers • Steve Hansen • Steve Veysey • The Dental Practice

Life Jacket Sponsors

Abigail Gries • Brian Strickland • Caitlin Waugh • Charity Nebbe • Dana McKeever Kent • David and Mary Koester • Elizabeth Bergeron • Emily Clark • John Miller • Kathy Dubansky • Katie Roltgen • John Clark • Loyd Herzberg • Morgan Holzer • Paul Arickx • Teresa McAndrews • Theodore Sink

Media Coverage for Iowa Project AWARE 2025

Press releases distributed

- **River Cleanup Coming to the Winnebago and Shell Rock Rivers** - February 27, 2025 [February Press Release](#)
- **Iowa Project AWARE Coming to Mason City** - May 30, 2025 [May Press Release](#)

Publications

- **The Hawk Eye** -March 26, 2024 [A.W.A.R.E. cleanup coming here this summer | The Hawk Eye - Burlington, Iowa | mississippivalleypublishing.com](#)
- **KCHA** - July 13, 2025 [Tires, Fridges, Toys: Iowa Project AWARE Comes to Clean Up Rivers in Cerro Gordo, Floyd Counties – KCHA NEWS](#)
- **Radio Iowa** - July 11, 2025 [Shell Rock and Winnebago rivers subject of week-long clean-up project - Radio Iowa](#)

Television

- **KTTC** - July 17, 2025 [Iowa Project AWARE Cleans Cedar River](#)
- **KAAL** - July 17, 2025 [Iowa Project AWARE volunteers continue cleaning efforts on the Shell Rock River](#)
- **KIMT** - July 15, 2025 [Project A.W.A.R.E focuses on Winnebago and Shell Rock rivers | Video | kmt.com](#)

Newspaper

- **The Gazette** - July 7, 2025 [Iowa Project AWARE Set to Reach Major Milestone](#)
- **ABC 6 News** - July 23, 2025 [Cerro Gordo County Community Foundation Awards](#)
- **KTTC** - July 16, 2025 [Iowa Project A.W.A.R.E. cleans Cedar River, collects one millionth pound of trash](#)

Radio

- **95.1 The Bull** - July 14, 2025 [Bull News Podcast for Monday, July 14, 2025](#)
- **Talk of Iowa** - June 30, 2025 [A dugout canoe gives Iowans the opportunity to touch Indigenous history | Iowa Public Radio](#)

Miscellaneous

- **Sierra Club Iowa Chapter** - March 21, 2025 [Brian Soenen Speaks at Annual Sierra Club Dinner](#)

Educational Programs for Iowa Project AWARE 2025

Sunday, July 13

- **2:00 pm – Afternoon Campground Programs** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Knots for Paddlers* - Jeff White (Skunk River Paddler and AWARE Volunteer)
- **3:00 pm – Afternoon Campground Programs** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Canoes Skills and Safety Clinic* - Shelly Weeks, Jim Dodd, Cindy Barrowcliff, Diane and Ken Birt (Iowa Project AWARE Volunteers)
 - *What Lies Beneath: Geological Wonders of the Winnebago and Shell Rock Watersheds* - Ryan Clark (Iowa Geological Survey)
 - *Craft a Mug Jacket* - Barb Petersen-Benjegerdes (Iowa Project AWARE Volunteer)
- **4:00 pm – Afternoon Campground Programs** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Floating the Mississippi for a Cause* - Hank Kohler (Lifelong Paddler)
 - *Bugs and Water Quality* - Kierra Determan (State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa)
- **5:30 pm – Afternoon Campground Programs** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Canoe Skills and Safety Clinic* - Glenn Harman (Iowa DNR Certified Instructor) Shelly Weeks, Jim Dodd, Cindy Barrowcliff, Diane and Ken Birt (Iowa Project AWARE Volunteers)
- **7:00 pm – Welcome and Introductions**

Monday, July 14

- **AM - Yoga - Kathy Dumont**
- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Informal Afternoon Activities** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Turtle Time* - Kari Jeffrey (Cerro Gordo County Conservation)
 - *Whitewater Kayaking* - Glenn Harman (Iowa DNR River Programs)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Sessions** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Nature Myth Busters* - Heather Hucka (Cerro Gordo County Conservation)
 - *Paddling While Impaired* - Dan Haug (Prairie Rivers of Iowa)

Tuesday, July 15

- **AM - Yoga - Kathy Dumont**
- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Informal Afternoon Activities** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Whitewater Kayaking* - Glenn Harman (Iowa DNR River Programs)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Sessions** (East Park, Mason City)
 - *Potential Use of eDNA for Assessment of Fish Species* - Claire Hruby & Alex Colby (Drake University)
 - *Fish and Turtles of the Mississippi River* - Denny Weiss (Retired Iowa DNR Fisheries)

Wednesday, July 16

- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Informal Afternoon Activities** (Tosanak Recreation Area, Marble Rock)
 - *Aquatic Animal Block Printing* - Heidi Reams (Floyd County Conservation)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Sessions** (Tosanak Recreation Area, Marble Rock)
 - *First Nations: Those Who Have Gone Before* - Cherie Haury-Artz (University of Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist)
 - *Breaking the Plains: An Environmental History of Iowa* - Daryl Sasser

Thursday, July 17

- **4:30 pm – Concurrent Informal Afternoon Activities** (Tosanak Recreation Area, Marble Rock)
 - *Rockford Fossil Prairie Park* - Heidi Reams (location - Rockford Fossil Prairie Park)
 - *Explore with Laura - Mushrooms and other critters* - Laura Waldo-Semken (Iowa Project AWARE Volunteer)
- **7:30 pm – Concurrent Evening Sessions** (Tosanak Recreation Area, Marble Rock)
 - *Birding for all ages* - Laura Waldo-Semken (Iowa Project AWARE Volunteer)
 - *Water Quality: A Range of Opinions and Thoughts* - Jim Pease