Water Quality Standards Rules Now in Effect
Legislature Provides Funding

By Neila Seaman, Director

The water quality standards rules, as approved by the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC), went into effect this spring when the Administrative Rules Review Committee (ARRC), a legislative oversight committee, chose not to take any action. As a result, the rules became effective March 22. The ARRC could have placed a legislative hold on the rules that would prevent them from taking effect until the legislature passed a bill that would impact the rules.

The Legislature, at the request of Gov. Vilsack, provided $18 million in funding for water quality projects. Of that amount, $9 million would be earmarked for lake dredging with $5 million to be determined by last year’s newly legislated Water Improvement Review board and $4 million to help communities comply with the new water quality standards rules.

However, the legislature unanimously passed SF 2363, a bill that Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club opposed and requested veto consideration by the Governor. Chapter Lobbyist Lyle Krewson reported last spring in this newsletter that the Senate had introduced Senate Study Bill SSB 3069. The bill – eventually renamed SF 2363 – included five sections, most of which Sierra Club adamantly opposed.

For example, the bill states, “[…] A water of the state shall be a designated stream segment when any one of the following is met […]” The bill lists three criteria that follow that intention. A significant concern is that a court of law will strictly interpret those three as the only times a stream segment could be designated. This is contrary to the intent of the Clean Water Act which requires that all existing aquatic life and recreational uses must be protected at all places and all times. To close this loophole we requested that an additional statement be added to this section: “… The federal Water Pollution Control Act and its implementing regulations require protection of the uses specified in section 101(a)(2) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act.”

This suggested change was rejected without a vote because it was determined no changes would be made to the amendment that weren’t technical – and this request was not considered technical.

According to the bill, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to “publish a list of all designated stream segments that receive a permitted discharge for which a UAA of recreational use and aquatic life has not yet been completed” by December 31, 2006. The DNR must then complete a UAA “for all CW Act designated stream segments that receive a permitted discharge for which a UAA of recreational use and aquatic life has not yet been completed” by December 31, 2006. The Sierra Club is concerned that there are no consequences included in the event the department doesn’t complete the required UAA’s by the December 2007 deadline. We are concerned that permittees will be allowed to continue to operate for many years under their old permit limits, in many cases unprotective of the existing aquatic life and recreational uses, until the DNR does complete the task. Under extenuating circumstances, the Clean Water Act does allow facilities to operate under the terms of expired permits, but the intent is for these extensions to be weeks or months.

This legislation will allow hundreds of facilities to discharge for years at levels that are presumptively and probably not protective while the UAA process, starved of funding, proceeds at a snail’s pace. This violates the intent of the Clean Water Act and the public review, comment, and recourse provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. To close this loophole we had requested adding language that would require an operation permit that expires before a UAA is performed to remain in effect without allowing the department to renew the permit until a use attainment analysis is completed or by December 31, 2007, whichever is earlier. This language was also rejected.

Finally, language about issuing variances concerns us because the DNR currently does not submit variances to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval although the EPA believes that is necessary. DNR has instead assumed the authority granted under Iowa’s general “variances to departmental rules” policy and proposes to apply those rules in the issuance of federal NPDES permits in a manner specifically proscribed by EPA. (This has already happened at least once, and has caught the attention of EPA). The language adopted in SF2363 simply codifies the illegal practices and sets Iowa on a collision course with EPA. In a letter to Iowa DNR received Dec. 4, 2002, EPA clearly stated the protocols IDNR must follow when issuing NPDES permits with limits calculated using variances from Iowa water quality standards. Most of the following EPA specified requirements for variances are violated or ignored by the SF2363 variance language:

• The specific variance must be adopted into State WQS and approved by EPA prior to its use for all CWA purposes, including the use of the variance as a basis for an effluent limitation in a NPDES permit.

• The variance must be subject to public notice, opportunity for comment, and public hearing.

• The variance must be granted for a specific period of time, not exceeding three years, and must be justified upon expiration.

• The discharger either must meet the standard upon the expiration of the time period or must make a new demonstration of “unattainability.”

• During the variance period, reasonable progress must be made toward meeting the standard.

It is probable that EPA will not formally take action against Iowa until DNR begins using unapproved variances in the issuance of NPDES permits; perhaps not until the substance of the variance (for example the duration) actually exceeds the limits allowed by EPA. However, EPA has requested a meeting with DNR to discuss the variance issue, among others.

The fourth section of the bill establishes a Water Quality Planning Task Force (originally named Water Quality Trading Task Force). The task force is required to report to the Legislature by June 30, 2008, its recommendations for a voluntary statewide water quality program that meet goals outlined in the bill. These goals include:

• Improving water quality and optimizing the costs of voluntarily achieving and maintaining water quality standards.

• Creating economic incentives for voluntary nonpoint source load reductions, point source discharge reductions, and infiltration required by the federal Clean Water Act, implementation of pollution prevention programs, wetland restoration and creation, and the development of emerging pollution control technologies.

• Facilitating the implementation of total maximum daily loads, urban stormwater control programs, and nonpoint source management practices required or authorized under the Clean Water Act. The DNR is still required to develop a total maximum daily load for waters that do not meet water quality standards as required by section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act or to delay implementation of a total maximum daily load that has been approved by the department and the director.

• Providing incentives for the development of new and more accurate and reliable pollution control quantification protocols and procedures.

• Providing greater flexibility through community-based, nonregulatory, and performance-driven watershed management planning.

Task force voting members include one representative each from the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities, the Iowa League of Cities, the Iowa Association of Business and Industry, the Iowa Water Pollution Control Association, the Iowa Rural Water Association, Growing Green Communities, the Iowa Environmental Council, the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, the Iowa Corn Growers Association, the Iowa Soybean Association, the Iowa Pork Producers Council, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Iowa, the department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship as selected by the secretary of Agriculture, the DNR as selected by the director, and two members selected by the Iowa Conservation Alliance. Nonvoting members of the task force will include two members of the Senate with one senator appointed by the republican leader of the Senate and one senator appointed by the democratic leader of the Senate; and two members of the House of Representatives with one member appointed by the speaker of the House and one member appointed by the House minority leader.

The final section provided a place mark for financial assistance for disadvantaged communities that ultimately resulted in a $4 million allocation.

Iowa Chapter Endorses Ed Fallon in Governor’s Race
Please see page 8 for complete article on endorsement.

Printed with soy ink on recycled-content paper.
Iowa Chapter honors activists and volunteers for their efforts to protect the environment. Please consider nominating someone for an award. We will present them at the Annual meeting in August 2006. Submit nominations by November 1, 2006.

Deadline for nominations is August 31, 2006.

The nomination must include:
- Award Category
- Name of nominee
- Address and phone number of nominee
- Statement of why you think the nominee should receive the award
- Your name, address and phone number.

If it is a group nomination give the name of a contact person. The Chapter Executive Committee will review nominations and nominations received after the deadline may not be considered.

Submit nominations by Email if possible to jcrclark@radix.net or to iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org or by mail to Jane R. Clark, 9871 Lincoln Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50325.

Iowa Chapter will honor activists and/or volunteers for significant contributions to the Iowa environment in a local community.

• Distinguished Service - For a Club member who has shown continuous dedication to the Club for over a number of years. This is the Iowa Chapter's highest award.

• Activist Award - For a member who has served the Club in various capacities during the past year in a way that greatly promoted the goals and purposes of the Iowa Chapter of Sierra Club.

• Public Service Award - For a national or Iowa Chapter elected official or appointee who has contributed significantly to environmental understanding at a community, county, or state level.

• Steward of the Land Award - For a farmer or other individual whose agricultural practices promote soil conservation and/or other environmentally positive results.

• Sierra Journals Award - For a Sierra Journals editor, staff member or author who has contributed significantly to environmental understanding in the Iowa Chapter's newsletter.

• Environmental Educator Award - For an educator at any level of education who has contributed significantly to an increased understanding of the environment.

• Grassroots Award - For any individual whose contributions have resulted in a significant change regarding the environment in a local community.

IOWA SIERRAN

The Iowa Sierran is dedicated to informing members and other friends about environmental issues that affect Iowa. It is a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences about environmental issues, for the presentation of views expressed by the authors and not necessarily that of the Sierra Club. Articles will be considered. The editor reserves the right to edit articles 400-1,000 words in length that relate to Iowa. Longer articles will be considered. The editor reserves the right to edit articles. The Iowa Sierran is dedicated to informing members and other friends about environmental issues that affect Iowa. It is a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences about environmental issues, for the presentation of views expressed by the authors and not necessarily that of the Sierra Club. Articles will be considered. The editor reserves the right to edit articles 400-1,000 words in length that relate to Iowa. Longer articles will be considered. The editor reserves the right to edit articles.
Natural reproduction of trout observed in 23 streams

Farming Practices, Habitat Restoration Improve Iowa's Trout Streams

DECORAH — Northeast Iowa is known for its scenic trout streams. But a few years ago, Iowa’s trout streams were so muddy that only six streams supported a naturally reproducing trout population. Today, projects have improved water quality, and both trout and local communities are reaping the benefits. The improvement came from projects on the land and in the streams. Trout depend on clear, clean and cold water to survive. The brown trout population in Spring Falls, a tributary of Elk Creek, depended entirely on stocking in 1991. Now, there is a self-sustaining population that offers more than 1,000 trout per mile of stream. Elk Creek is just one success story, one that benefits local communities. As fishing improves, so does business for local shops, gas stations, hotels and restaurants. According to a 2001 DNR trout angler survey, licensed trout anglers made an estimated 372,338 trips to trout fisheries in Iowa. At approximately $25 per day — that includes food, lodging, transportation and equipment — more than $9.3 million is spent annually on trout fishing in Iowa. “We do cater to the trout fisherman, and in northeast Iowa, a big chunk of sales come from that. When they come, they come to buy,” said Dave Nading, owner of Nading’s Service and Sporting in Strawberry Point. To keep Iowa’s trout streams a success, work in the watershed needs to continue. Current conservation practices need to be maintained, and new watersheds and miles of stream need projectors. “The landowners can be proud of what they’ve done,” said Bryan Hayes, DNR fisheries biologist at the Manchester trout hatchery. “But even when projects end, we need to build on what we started and maintain what we’ve put in place.” Local watershed projects are sponsored by county Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Many of these projects are funded by the DNR. This funding is made possible through the Section 319 program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which funds the DNR funding the non-point pollution programs. The DNR generally funds local watershed projects in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. 

Iowa has 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), which are legal subdivisions of state government. Five commissioners, elected in general elections on a non-partisan basis for four-year terms, govern each district. The board of commissioners elects the executive director, and has been working with voluntary, private land conservation in Iowa since as early as 1939. SWCD Commissioners help guide soil and water conservation programs in the district and watershed, identify local issues and concerns, and influence state and national conservation programs. SWCD Commissioners are responsible for carrying out state laws and programs. They also serve as local sponsors for watershed projects, resource conservation and development areas, and soil survey. They work closely with local, state, and federal agencies, particularly the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as local groups, organizations, and individuals interested in improving the quality of Iowa’s environment. During this election year several Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) will be elected in the 100 districts throughout Iowa. If you qualify to vote in a general election, you’re eligible to be a candidate for election to your county’s soil and water conservation district board. Information forms, including a petition, are available in the county Auditor’s office. Candidates may begin circulating nomination petitions August 7. At least 25 eligible voters must sign the petition. Remember to file it with the Auditor’s office by the date August 30, 2006 deadline in order to be on the ballot in November. Only one person per township within a district can be represented on the district board.

The natural resources issue may not be the same as they were when the soil conservation movement began, but the work is far from complete. Water quality, non-point pollution and habitat concern has grown bigger concern than has been in the past. And with the new Farm Bill being developed, opportunities to improve our environment will expand. This is a great opportunity to become involved in environmental work at the local level. Iowa’s SWCD are a largely unrecognized but very effective tool utilized to improve soil and water quality. Your involvement will include assisting in developing conservation priorities, resolving soil loss complaints, approving soil conservation plans and assisting in the management of district funds and personnel. A SWCD Commissioner is a volunteer conservation promoter who helps direct local districts to promote conservation of Iowa’s natural resources. Since its inception, SWCD has been working with SWCD Commissioners in Iowa to promote sustainable agricultural practices for the protection of soil and water resources. While each SWCD maintains its own programs, SWCD helps the districts combine efforts to address regional, state, and national issues. If you are interested in becoming a commissioner, or would like to participate in conservation of your natural resources locally, contact your local SWCD. Information regarding your local SWCD is available on the CDIA website; please visit www.cdiowa.org.

For more information: 
Deb Ryan, Executive Director PO Box 801 Castalia, IA 50949 641-774-4461 deb-ryan@cdiowa.org www.cdiowa.org

Last December (2005) LS Power Company announced that they intend to build a 750-MW pulverized-coal-fired electric generating plant in Cedar County. The implications of the plant may not be adequately addressed. The initial announcement of the plant promoted it as a pure and wonderful thing in the economic development of the metro area. Waterloo, especially its east side, is economically depressed and in need of good jobs and economic development of the correct kind. It is believed by many that if the coal-fired power plant had been proposed for another part of the city or in adjacent Cedar Falls, it would have met with much more initial objections. It did seem that the city leaders and the newspaper were behind the proposal when it was first announced. However, a grassroots campaign against the proposed plant took a to the spotlight as early as January of this year. Some 3,000 signatures have appeared on petitions, 1,000 yard signs are being distributed, and many letters have appeared in the newspaper objecting to the plant. On 11 May, the Iowa Utilities Board held a meeting required before the Company can file a petition (application) with IUB. About 500 citizens were present, and it appeared that most were opposed to the plant. The remains of the power would be sold out of state. However, the Company apparently does not yet have the contracts it needs.

Iowa does not have a state requirement for environmental impact statements and the permitting process is somewhat fragmented. The Iowa Utilities Board and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources must each grant a permit, but the two agencies can coordinate well. There is also a concern that public need, socio-economic impacts, and other implications of the plant may not be adequately addressed. The initial announcement of the plant promoted it as a pure and wonderful thing in the economic development of the metro area. Waterloo, especially its east side, is economically depressed and in need of good jobs and economic development of the correct kind. It is believed by many that if the coal-fired power plant had been proposed for another part of the city or in adjacent Cedar Falls, it would have met with much more initial objections. It did seem that the city leaders and the newspaper were behind the proposal when it was first announced. However, a grassroots campaign against the proposed plant took a to the spotlight as early as January of this year. Some 3,000 signatures have appeared on petitions, 1,000 yard signs are being distributed, and many letters have appeared in the newspaper objecting to the plant. On 11 May, the Iowa Utilities Board held a meeting required before the Company can file a petition (application) with IUB. About 500 citizens were present, and it appeared that most were opposed to the plant. The remains of the power would be sold out of state. However, the Company apparently does not yet have the contracts it needs.

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Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers
Aquatic Invasive Species in Iowa

They come on boats. They are stowaways in cargo. And sometimes people smuggled in by people. They are aquatic invasive species (AIS). AIS do not occur naturally in Iowa’s lakes, rivers, and wetlands. Most are to the west or regions outside of North America and were originally introduced by humans. Some introductions, such as that of purple loosestrife and common carp, are intentional and were not expected to fail. Many more introductions are unintentional.

Most of the AIS in Iowa, such as zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, and Asian carp, have arrived since 1990 and spread unobtrusively from lake to lake. But one AIS that gets noticed is the one that jumps out of the water and hits you in the head.

These flying fish, silver and bighead carp, have brought attention to the growing problem of AIS. Silver carp are uniformly silver in color, and the belly is white to silvery-white. Bighead carp have heads and fins that are slate gray and silver sides blotched with black that fade to a white belly. Both species have very small scales. Silver and bighead carp are plankton feeders and may have significant impacts on food availability for larval fish.

Silver and bighead carp are both only two of many AIS. Iowa is also under attack from Eurasian watermilfoil, purple loosestrife, and zebra mussels.

Eurasian watermilfoil is an aquatic plant native to Europe and Asia. It was introduced into North America in the 1940s and has spread to at least 45 states and 3 Canadian provinces. It has been identified in 28 waterbodies in Iowa, including the Mississippi River, since 1993. The long stems have long, narrow, feather-like leaves arranged in whorls of four around the stem. Each leaf is finely divided into 9 to 21 pairs of leaflets. Stems usually branch several times as they reach the water surface, forming a dense floating mat. Eurasian watermilfoil competes aggressively with native aquatic plants, thereby reducing diversity. Dense surface mats interfere with boating, fishing, and swimming, and lower lakewater property values, and provide poor spawning areas.

European settlers introduced purple loosestrife to North America in the 1890s. In Iowa it is found in the Mississippi, Missouri, Chariton, Des Moines, Skunk, Iowa, Cedar, and Big Sioux Rivers in Iowa. Both species are large, deep-bodied fish reaching a maximum size of about 3 feet and 60 pounds. The sides of silver carp are uniformly silver in color, and the belly is white to silvery-white. Bighead carp have heads and fins that are slate gray and silver sides blotched with black that fade to a white belly. Both species have very small scales. Silver and bighead carp are plankton feeders and may have significant impacts on food availability for larval fish.

Silver and bighead carp are both only two of many AIS. Iowa is also under attack from Eurasian watermilfoil, purple loosestrife, and zebra mussels. Zebra mussels are small, mussels native to the Caspian Sea region of Asia that were introduced into the Great Lakes in 1986 in ballast water. They quickly spread throughout the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, and other inland waterbodies in the U.S. They have infested the portion of the Mississippi River since 1992. Zebra mussels have D-shaped shells up to 2 inches long with alternating dark and light stripes. They grow in clusters containing numerous individuals attached to solid objects. Zebra mussels compete with other organisms for food, kill native clams by colonizing on their shells, clog power plant and public water intake pipes, and cover beaches with dead shells. Zebra mussel densities are so thick in places on the Mississippi River that dead shells form a layer 6 feet deep, and at times new native mussel beds are found without zebra mussels attached to them.

Many AIS spread between waterbodies by hitchhiking on boats and trailers, in bait buckets, and on aquatic plants. Once AIS infest a waterbody, they cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to control and may be impossible to eradicate. As AIS are spreading, their introduction into new waterbodies is a concern, because they are the most easily identified by its magenta flowers. Flowers are most easily identified by its magenta flowers. Flowers are

Never release animals or plants into the wild unless they are originally from that waterbody.

Learn to identify and locate the nearest known infestations of AIS to help monitor AIS or conduct watercraft inspection activities.

Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.

Spray, rinse, or dry boats and recreational equipment to remove or kill species that were not visible when leaving a waterway.

Inspect your boat, trailer, and equipment and remove visible aquatic plants, animals, and zebra mussels from your boat before leaving a waterbody.

Drain water from your boat, motor, bilge, livewell, and bait container before leaving a waterbody..

For more information, contact Kim Bogenschutz, Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Coordinator, at 515-432-2823.
New Wetlands Report Misleads Public—Including Ponds with Wetlands in Bush Administration Report Fails to Tell the Real Story

March 30, 2006

A New Bush administration report on wetland trends misleads the public by counting ponds as wetlands when attempting to demonstrate a net gain for wetlands across the country. President Bush has committed to a net gain of wetlands, but so far, his administration has failed to stop the loss of these vital areas that provide clean water and homes for countless wildlife.

“This would be great news if the nation were really gaining wetlands, but unfortunately, this report provides more evidence of Bush administration spin than a net increase in wetlands,” said Ed Hopkins, Director of Sierra Club’s Environmental Quality Program. “An open pond is not a wetland.”

The new report, the National Wetlands Inventory’s “Status and Trends of America’s Wetlands 1998-2004” was released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) March 30. It reports on the acreage of wetlands across the country based on a combination of aerial surveys and some on-the-ground field checking. However, the report fails to distinguish between actual wetlands and ponds used for treating wastewater, stormwater and other effluent and as amenities for subdivisions. There is a nationwide trend towards the construction of ponds, sometimes out of wetlands, to use as treatment systems and as suburban amenities. These waterbodies may be considered deepwater, aquatic resources, but they should hardly be considered the naturally existing wetlands that, in many instances, they have replaced.

“Anyone can see the difference between a natural wetland and a man-made pond,” said Hopkins.

At the recent Annual Meeting of the Association of State Wetland Managers, a USFWS representative acknowledged a nationwide proliferation of pond constructions, represent-
Based on Controversial Science, Bill Would Increase Future Fire Risk
House Passes Destructive Salvage Logging Bill

May 17, 2006
Contact: Annie Stricker, (415) 977-5619
Washington, D.C. – Ignoring concerns about increased fire risk to our national parks and the destruction of commercial logging, the House today passed by a 243 to 182 vote, a far-reaching Salvage Logging bill. The ill-named Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act, a bill which disregards disingenuous protections for clean drinking water and wildlife, promotes subsidized logging road construction in wild roadless forests and eliminates meaningful environmental analysis and public involvement required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

“As the fire season gets underway, it is shameful that Congress is once again diverting critical funds from real fire protection in order to fast track more destructive logging,” said Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director. “This bill has nothing to do with forest recovery or research, and everything to do with logging and subsidizing the timber industry.”

The bill creates more perverse incentives for harmful logging, and diverts funding from fire suppression, preservation, hazardous fuels reduction and community fire planning. It is also likely that more funds will even be diverted from needed replanting and restoration work to pay for salvage logging.

“This bill in effect says that compromising citizen and firefighter safety in order to cut down more trees is a fair trade,” said Pope.

Salvage logging after fires or other disturbances can increase the severity of future fires because of the increase in fuel loads from logging slash and the alteration of the charred and ash bed of other vegetation. In recent weeks the group Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE)—a non-profit organization of current, former, and retired wildland firefighters to promote firefighter and community safety—came out in opposition to the bill. They know that this bill would make forests more flammable and increase the safety risks for wildland firefighters. The bill is also opposed by taxpayer advocates because of the great increase in waste, fraud and abuse associated with the federal timber program.

The bill has been at the heart of a scandal over efforts to censor the science showing that post-fire logging can increase fire risk and hamper the ability of forests to recover from natural disturbances. A handful of faculty at Oregon State University sought to derail publication of a controversial groundbreaking scientific report by some of their colleagues. The study, based on two years of on-the-ground research from the aftermath of logging in the Biscuit fire area in Southwest Oregon, appeared in Science magazine in January and was critical of post-fire logging due to increased fire risk and the destruction of young trees growing back on their own. An inquiry by the Oregon state legislature revealed that some of the same OSU faculty and staff that had been involved in the censorship efforts also collaborated closely with Republican congressional staff and timber industry lobby groups to “damage control” so that the Science article would not derail the progress of the Walden bill.

“Congress didn’t just ignore the implications for wild- life and forest health when passing this salvage logging bill,” said Pope. “They also showed aside legitimate concerns about firefighter and community safety while making room for politicized science.”

You can also find background info on the website at www.sierraclub.org/forest

Editor’s note: There is a similar bill introduced in the Senate by Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), although there has not been any committee action on it. The Energy and Natural Resources committee could bring it up in the next two months but the overall legislative calendar is pretty busy. It wouldn’t hurt to let Senators Harkin and Grassley know that Sierra Club opposes the salvage logging bill.

America’s Crown Jewels at Risk
By John Byrne, (Virginia), Chair, Sierra Club’s National Parks Committee

Yosemite! Grand Canyon! Yellowstone! Denali! Everglades! What do these names have in common? They are all national parks whose names are known by everyone, the true crown jewels of America. And being national parks, they are all well protected, right?

Wrong! The present Administration, attuned to maximizing commercial profits and minimizing the public values of our public lands, has other plans for your national parks.

The Interior Department proposal to rewrite the management policies for our parks would topple “conservation of resources unimpaired for the future” as the mission of our national parks. Under proposed new management policies, the Park Service could:

• Consider increased uses of park resources just as the proposed damaging changes. Most comments can be summarized as follows: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

• Let commercial outfitters keep caches and other resources unimpaired for the future.

• “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” and “Our parks need more protection for the future, not less.”

If the Administration listens to the public’s concerns, they will withdraw the proposed changes. However, we’re not counting on that! Although the first round of comments is over, the Administration, overwhelmed by the outpouring of public opinion, is considering reopening the comment period. Now is the perfect time to publicize our outrage over the Administration’s proposed damaging changes.

Please send a Letter to the Editor of your paper, and send a copy of it to your members of Congress. Here’s sample language for a Letter to Editor, to put into your own words.

(Start with some personal info and reason why you care about the parks or about one particular park that you live near.)

America’s National Parks provide some of the finest outdoor recreation opportunities, scenic wonders, and wildlife habitat. Millions of Americans and visitors from around the world flock to our parks each year. But the National Park Service’s (NPS) proposed rewrite of the park’s Management Policies would fundamentally shift how our national parks are managed from resource conservation toward commercialization.

A LONGING FOR WILDERNESS OR WILDSN
By Bruce Ehresman

I am glad to say that there is an important discussion happening in Iowa concerning WILDERNESS. There is a growing concern that the Iowa Connectivity Project that celebrates wilderness and is exploring the possibilities of re-connecting animal populations to other animal populations, re-connecting humans to nature, creating corridors for bridging gaps - gaps between people and the land, the natural. Please keep your eyes and ears open for information, events, and happenings about wilderness and the Iowa Connectivity Project.

Here are some words to consider written by a champion for wild places, Sigurd Olson, from a chapter he called “A Longing for Wilderness.”

“...we enjoy comforts never known before, but they are not enough, somehow, someway, we must make contact with naturalness, the source of all life. The frontiers are still too close to forget and the memory of wilderness goes far back into the ages when humans lived close to the earth and to God in tune with the ancient rhythms. We still listen to the song of the wilderness and long for a land we have lost. Civilization has not changed its needs, which were there long before it arose. This is the reason for the hunger, this is the true meaning of wilderness and the search of moderns for places where they can know it again. The battle to save the last remnants is only a struggle for freedom and beauty, but for the spirit of humans in a world that seems to have lost its balance and perspective.”

The author Wallace Stegner warned some years ago, “Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed, if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of a wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence . . . the reassurance that wilderness is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never live in 10 years set foot in it.”

The Iowa Project for Connectivity, A Wild Ioway Discovery Event, is sponsored by Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation’s Agrestal Fund

DON’T MISS OUT!
If you’re not on the Iowa Topics listserv you’re missing out on information about everything from genetically modified organisms to energy policy to wetlands information and more. The listserv is a combination of legislative information, meetings and outings announcements, take-action alerts and general discussion. It is open to any subscriber. Any message relating to the environment or the Iowa Chapter is welcome to be posted on the list.

To subscribe, address an e-mail to LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG. In the message body, type the following one line command (use your first and last name instead of the example given):

SUBSCRIBE IOWA-TOPICS Your first name Your last name. No subject is necessary.
**Global Warming: An Inconvenient Truth**

**Ten Things To Do**

Want to do something to help stop global warming? Here are 10 simple things you can do and how much carbon dioxide you’ll save doing them.

- **Change a light.** Replacing one regular light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb will save 150 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
- **Drive less.** Walk, bike, carpool or take mass transit more often. You’ll save one pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don’t drive.
- **Recycle more.** You can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide per year by recycling just half of your household waste.
- **Check your tires.** Keeping your tires inflated properly can improve gas mileage by more than 3%. Every gallon of gasoline saved keeps 20 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere!
- **Use less hot water.** It takes a lot of energy to heat water. Use less hot water by installing a low flow showerhead (350 pounds of CO2 saved per year) and washing your clothes in cold or warm water (500 pounds saved per year).
- **Avoid products with a lot of packaging.** Buying less packaging reduces the demand for the raw materials that eventually end up in the water. As Project AWARE volunteers learn, much of the trash, chemicals and other materials used on the land will eventually end up in the water.
- **Move your thermostat.** Setting your thermostat down just 2 degrees in winter and up 2 degrees in summer can reduce your utility bills by 10%.
- **Change a water fixture.** A low-flow toilet uses just 1.6 gallons per flush, and it can save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year!
Earth Day Legacy Depends on Us

By Doug La Follette

Thirty-six years ago, in 1970, a group of us, led by then Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson organized the first Earth Day. This April, we had the first Earth Day without Senator Nelson, who died last year at the age of 94. It was his vision that made Earth Day happen, but it will be the job of a new generation to keep it going. We will never see another spring to way in 2006, I was admittedly ambivalent about where we are headed in terms of environmental protection — as a people, as a nation and as a world. We have made some headway in protecting our environment, but for all to see. Black smoke billowed from smokestacks and dead fish floated in polluted rivers. People across America knew our country was getting polluted but we didn’t quite know what to do about it. Senator Nelson, seeing a need for national leadership, spearheaded not only the first Earth Day, but also a movement in the United States Congress to write legislation to protect our environment.

As a result, the following years brought some great success. Congress passed the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. The federal government created fuel economy standards for cars and trucks, and state after state passed legislation to ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations.

Somehow along the line — perhaps coinciding with the rise of conservative talk radio and conservative cable news programming — positive feelings about our collective work to protect the environment turned into a backlash against “tree huggers.”

Sadly, as we celebrated Earth Day 2006 this year, we are without the kind of leadership Senator Nelson and others provided at the national level. Not only has Congress not passed a meaningful piece of conservation legislation in the past decade, the current administration has made it a priority to roll-back previous environmental protections. This is a discouraging state of affairs.

However, I am heartened by what I see when I travel across America and visit with people in their communities. For example, I spent this past Earth Day in Montana. People there, in that relatively conservative state, are interested in another type of “conservatism” — conservation — and are concerned about issues like global climate change.

Montanans know first hand what is at stake. The glaciers in beautiful Glacier National Park are melting at an alarming rate and will be gone, scientists say, within the next 30 years. Farmers and ranchers have suffered nearly a decade of dry weather and increased temperatures, making an already difficult job even harder. Talk to hunting and fishing enthusiasts and learn that the ducks are on the decline and rising river temperatures are putting a real strain on the trout habitat in the land of Norman McLean’s beloved Blackfoot River. Montana’s former United States Senator Mike Mansfield and Lee Metcalf worked with Senator Gaylord Nelson on the legislation that was born out of the original Earth Day movement. Current Senator Max Baucus marshaled the most recent Clean Air Act through the United States Senate in 1990 and Governor Brian Schweitzer this year launched a special committee to deal specifically with climate change issues. What I see in Montana gives me hope.

But hope is not enough. Ensuring a healthy climate for future generations will take action. And like it or not, leadership on these issues will not come from Washington, D.C. Unlike the obvious effects of the 60’s and 70’s — dead fish and smokestacks — the current issues facing us are more difficult to see. We can’t see greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, we can’t taste mercury in the fish we eat, and a change in temperature of one degree here and there doesn’t seem like a big deal.

Our “leaders” will have to be led by us. They are going to need all of us to give them the courage to lead and the will to take a stand. It’s not about the environment versus the economy or liberal versus conservative, it’s about ensuring that our children and grandchildren have the same opportunities that we have. That was Senator Nelson’s vision and it can be our future.

Doug La Follette is an original Earth Day organizer, former Sierra Club Board Director and the current Secretary of State of Wisconsin.

Iowa Chapter Endorses Ed Fallon in Governor’s Race

Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club made a final endorsement in a statewide primary race, calling on their 6,000 members to support State Representative Ed Fallon in the four-way race for the Democratic nomination for Governor.

“Ed Fallon has always called on Iowans to recognize that we have a responsibility to ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations. Congress passed the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act to protect the environment — and to protect our lives. In the 1970’s, national leadership, spearheaded not only the first Earth Day, but also a movement in the United States Congress to write legislation to protect our environment.

As a result, the following years brought some great success. Congress passed the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. The federal government created fuel economy standards for cars and trucks, and state after state passed legislation to ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations.

Sierra Club