

# RIVER BILL OF RIGHTS

The River Bill of Rights was developed to recognize and represent the relationship between people and the rivers. The River Bill of Rights creates a foundation and expectations for river protection and enhancement – allowing us to work in cooperation with others to ensure a lasting legacy of healthy and clean rivers and streams.



***Rivers provide a variety of economic, environmental and recreational resources. Iowa's rivers unite vibrant river communities, join diverse landscapes and link scenic trails, thus helping to sustain Iowa's ecological and cultural heritage. To preserve these values, the following rights of rivers must be recognized:***

**Co-exist in harmony.** Rivers are an indicator for the overall health of our ecosystem. The condition and quality of our rivers are a reflection of the respect and appreciation bestowed upon them. Rivers must be cared for and valued as an asset of the community, and when used sustainably and responsibly, they will produce a clean and healthy natural resource.

**Flow free.** Rivers and streams should flow free from the constraint of unnecessary dams and levees – allowing for safe recreation and natural migration of fish and other aquatic species. Rivers need the space to expand and recede, reducing flood risk and damage.

**Flow at a natural pace.** The natural bend, curve and shift of streams and rivers, combined with wetlands and perennial plants should be preserved to slow the rate of flow and filter and provide storage for water.

**Flow clean.** Rivers should flow free from excessive nutrients, sediment, and chemicals. Rivers should not be routinely used as dumping grounds for trash, sewage, manure, and other pollutants which create unhealthy conditions.

**Representation.** Rivers are not able to speak for themselves. River advocates must be the river's voice in recognizing and addressing localized threats to river quality and safety.

**Access.** Rivers are a common resource and should be accessible to all for responsible use.

[www.iowarivers.org](http://www.iowarivers.org)