



River Town of the Year Recipients

Each year, Iowa Rivers Revival presents the “*River Town of the Year*” Award to an Iowa river community that demonstrates a commitment “to reclaiming the waterfront as an anchor for economic development, recreation and ecological practices, as well as addressing some of the challenges and solutions related to water quality.”

Elgin (2018):

Elgin’s collaboration with other communities and entities in the Turkey River Watershed has grabbed our attention. The rural community of Elgin considers the Turkey River a “central resource.” The Turkey River Watershed Management Authority (WMA) was formed in June 2012. Elgin has collaborated with the Iowa Flood Center, Northeast Iowa RC&D and Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation in a pilot project in the Otter Creek Watershed, part of the larger Turkey River Watershed, to reduce flood impacts.



Elgin, along with the TRRC, was successful in designating the Turkey River as a State Water Trail. The water trail has fostered an increase in tourism and economic development in Elgin and Fayette and Clayton Counties. The Turkey River and City of Elgin are now considered a significant state tourist destination.

Clive (2017):

Clive considers Walnut Creek to be a defining element of the community. Like other Iowa river cities we have recognized, Clive is celebrating its past, present and future with Walnut Creek. Clive earned the River Town of the Year especially for its efforts to stabilize streambanks of Walnut Creek, adopt a watershed-wide approach and planning with all its neighbor communities. Clive invested \$80 million in public and private funds over 25 years in a Greenbelt Master Plan, and has collaborated with resident volunteers who formed *Green and Sustainable Clive* to remove invasive species, plant trees, and clean up the Creek. Clive has lead the way in organizing technical training for communities on stream restoration strategies, working with Iowa Rivers Revival, the Iowa DNR, and other area agencies.

Clinton (2016):

Clinton is a historic river town whose first European settlers arrived about 1835; it was incorporated in 1857. We are especially impressed with Clinton's forward-looking efforts to protect the environment, improve waste water going into the river, and reduce storm water and pollutants discharging to the river. Their new Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility uses new technology to reclaim waste water and reduce nutrient pollution discharges to the Mississippi. It reduces harm to marine life in the river. It is a collaborative regional facility (with nearby Camanche and Low Moor) that saves money, spreads benefits, and positions the communities well as new strategies and regulations emerge to reduce nutrient pollution.

Council Bluffs (2015): Council Bluffs leaders and local partners are making the Missouri River riverfront the center of life and bringing citizens and visitors "Back to the River." Council Bluffs' "Back to the River" initiative provides the vision and focus for protecting and preserving the Missouri River greenbelt and natural space along the riverbank for flood protection, recrea-tional use, and ecological enhancements, including water quality and improved habitat benefits.

Manchester (2015): Manchester is reviving the Maquoketa River as the heart and soul of the community. Local leaders have developed a vision to make the riverfront the town's defining attraction, which includes a strong commitment to restore the river to its natural state and to do it in a manner beneficial to both the health of the river and the health of the community." On-going projects and plans for the future will deepen Manchester's connection to the Maquoketa River through recreation, economic development, and environmental stewardship opportunities.

Decorah (2014): Decorah and the Upper Iowa River valley are regarded by many as Iowa's *most scenic, most popular, and most visited* interior Iowa river. The people of Decorah and the "Oneota Valley" are deeply aware of the legacy they have inherited with this beautiful valley, and they are passionate about protecting it, enjoying it, sharing it, improving it, and passing it on for generations to come. City leaders have recognized the value and importance of cooperation and partnerships in protecting and embracing the Upper Iowa River Valley. Decorah serves as a model for their efforts to improve water quality and clarity in the Upper Iowa River. City officials are connecting residents and visitors through an impressive trail and park system bordering the river, and continue to develop plans for future expansion and attractions. Educational opportunities focused on river issues and ecosystems reach elementary, middle and high school students, Luther College environmental studies programs, and community events and programs reinforce the Upper Iowa River as a foundation of this community.

Dubuque (2013): This historic city is in the midst of a renaissance in its relationship to the Mississippi River – improving recreation, protecting the environment and bolstering its economy. Dubuque has accomplished a remarkable turnaround over the last couple decades, and the river is right at the heart of it all. Dubuque is a great example of public officials, community leaders, civic organizations, businesses and citizens who refocused on their river to improve quality of life. Dubuque is thriving on teamwork, partnership, and community involvement. These collaborative efforts have led to the transformation of the Port of Dubuque, showcasing the river's influence on residents and visitors. The "daylighting" of Bee Branch Creek is a unique and innovative example of the community embracing its local stream resources by opening up the historic creek that was buried in a storm sewer more than a century ago. Other features are the 11-mile Dubuque Water Trail that runs along the Mississippi River and Catfish Creek; the Catfish Creek Watershed Management Authority (CCWMA), a multi-jurisdictional organization working on water quality, flooding and other issues in the 57-square-mile watershed; and an extensive biking and hiking trail system spanning 45 miles along the river front, connecting the Mississippi to community parks, the downtown, and some of Dubuque's oldest neighborhoods.

Central City (2013): For the past dozen years Central City has been revitalizing its relationship to the Wapsipinicon River. Central City is a great example of an Iowa town that values and features its river. The leadership, foresight and remarkable collaboration of the Central City Mayor and City Council, City Park & Recreation Board, City staff, Central City Main Street, the Mainstreet Design Committee, the Linn County Conservation Board and staff, civic organizations, and many other volunteers and citizens led to opportunities that connect residents and visitors to the "Wapsi." After the Flood of 1999, Central City responded by working with FEMA to buy out flood-plain properties, and dedicated the land primarily to be riverfront parks. There are many activities and events flourishing at the river – people are fishing, canoeing, walking, biking, kayaking, tubing, and paddle-boating.