

Clean up on Four-Mile Creek

2017  
*Annual  
Report*

*Iowa Rivers  
revival*







River Rascals practice their new paddling skills on the river.

# Our Accomplishments

## Advocacy

**Protected four species of turtles during their nesting seasons and restricted daily catch limits.** After a tireless year-long effort with several partners to try and ban the unregulated commercial harvest of wild turtles in Iowa, a compromise was reached through the state rule-making process. The Natural Resource Commission determined that commercial and recreational harvest can continue so long as egg-laying females are protected during most of their nesting season and restrictive daily catch and possession limits were put in place. These rules applied to common snapping turtles, spiny and smooth softshell turtles, and painted turtles and required a five-year DNR study to determine the effect on population numbers.

**Led a valiant fight for low-head dam mitigation and water trails funding.** Despite best efforts, the funding for the DNR River Program out of RIIF (Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund) was zeroed out this session. However, conversations around river recreation opportunities helped spearhead the Des Moines MPO's Central Iowa Watertrails and Greenways Master Plan. Successful projects like whitewater courses in Charles City and Manchester highlight the possibilities that come with restoration.

**Continued to work hard with the Iowa's Water and Land Legacy (IWILL) coalition.** IRR's priority remains to bring Iowans together in support of immediate, permanent, reliable, sustainable funding aimed at improving Iowa water quality, protecting soil, enhancing wildlife habitat, and increasing recreation opportunities. With a small increase in our state's sales tax, we can fund the trust to preserve Iowa for future generations.

**Off-season advocacy. The State Capitol can be a stressful place.** That's where off-season advocacy comes in to play. With the help of our outstanding lobby team and various partners around the state, IRR has been working hard to connect with community leaders and elected officials in THEIR home town by paddling on THEIR rivers. By connecting people to the resource and highlighting the value of that resource, new and creative conversations can be had about real change for rivers and the communities they touch.



IRR members lobby legislators for river restoration at the statehouse.



Service Squad member, John Cecil and his daughter, help with Four-Mile Creek clean up.

## our mission

to help Iowans restore, protect, and enjoy our rivers

## our vision

clean, free-flowing Iowa rivers teeming with life, surrounded by diverse landscapes, and connecting vibrant communities

## our philosophy

Iowa Rivers Revival is a non-profit statewide leader in river education and advocacy and is committed to protecting some of our most precious natural resources—our rivers and streams. IRR works to engage individuals, organizations, communities, and government leaders in river awareness, responsibility, and enjoyment to improve and enhance the condition of Iowa waterways—ensuring a quality, safe, and lasting resource for future generations.



## Outreach

**Technical Advisory Committee.** As we continue to grow our partnerships and expand our knowledge about rivers and restoration in Iowa, we rely on many talented allies to keep us on track. The IRR Technical Committee (TAC) has been an invaluable source of information and research sharing. This impressive group of university researchers and professors, engineers, state employees, and non-profit professionals are helping us grow the vision for river restoration in Iowa.

**River Rascals.** This was the ninth year of the River Rascals program and IRR's partnership with the Children and Families Urban Movement (CFUM). Ten fourth and fifth graders worked with an incredible team of volunteers to experience rivers up close and personally. They learned basic paddling skills and water safety, river biology and wildlife identification, and rock skipping and paddle splashing. The final of three Saturdays in August culminated with a canoe adventure and river cleanup on the Raccoon River.

**Service Squad #SquadGoals.** As an advocacy group, it can be hard to engage volunteers in a meaningful and memorable way. Individuals would come up and say, "What can I do to help?" The Service Squad is a volunteer corps borne out of two non-profit organizations with a passion for the environment. This is a group that wants to DO something. We have meetups throughout the year and adopted a section of Four-Mile Creek through Metro Waste Authority's Adopt-A-Stream program. Join our Facebook group!

## Capacity Building

**Supporters.** We could not do what we do without our supporters! IRR is proud to say that we had 86 "River Champions" last year. River Champions are donors who give \$250 or more in a year. We had a total of 193 donors helping us reach our goals in 2017, with 42 being first year donors to IRR!

**New Board Members.** IRR was pleased to add Matt Kaufman and Staci Williams to our board.

## our history

In March 2006, a coalition of individuals, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations organized the inaugural "Iowa Rivers Revival" conference. There, the need for a statewide organization committed to river advocacy, conservation, and education was affirmed. Following the conference, a dedicated core group of volunteers continued to meet monthly to develop the mission and vision for a new statewide river organization, including an agenda of programs and priorities to protect and enhance Iowa's rivers. Iowa Rivers Revival was officially incorporated by the state of Iowa as a non-profit organization in November 2006 and received federal nonprofit status in March 2009.

"I joined Iowa Rivers Revival because I saw a group of passionate individuals making a positive and meaningful impact on our rivers and streams."

— Matt Kaufman, IRR member

"Iowa Rivers Revival's leadership in furthering policy solutions and working collaboratively with diverse stakeholders around the state to build a coalition of river advocates is critical to ensuring the future health of our creeks and rivers."

— Staci Williams, new board member

## financial summary

IRR's funds have been used carefully and efficiently and are essential to our growing effectiveness and impact.

Carryover from 2016	\$53,606.09
Total income	\$125,814.04
Total Expense	\$118,623.82
Balance End of 2017	\$60,796.31



## River Roadshow

We know that the best way to get people to care about rivers in Iowa is to get them out on a river. This simple theory of environmental education helped us develop the River Roadshow. For the second year in a row, we worked with partners at the DNR—including (former) Director Chuck Gipp, Iowa county conservation boards, local engineering firms, and some amazing volunteers, and took community leaders out to ‘Realize their River.’

The idea is simple. Bring people together for some lunch and talk about current and future projects and a vision for river engagement. While in kayaks or canoes, we talk about funding options, water quality, and recreational opportunities that could improve the community. We build relationships and create connections.

This year, we paddled with state legislators, city council members, developers, county supervisors, members of the press, and interested citizens at the following locations:

- Project AWARE — Cedar River (7/10/17)
- Elgin — Turkey River (7/19/17)
- Fort Dodge — Des Moines River (7/31/17)
- Clive — Projects on Walnut Creek, Paddle on Raccoon River (8/1/17)
- Des Moines — Boat ride to Center Street Dam on Des Moines River (8/4/17)



## River Restoration Technical Workshops

To continue to grow support for river restoration, low-head dam mitigation, and water trail improvements in Iowa, workshops are an important way to assist communities and technical experts. In preparation for the future DNR River Restoration Toolbox, curriculum and partnerships began to develop to focus the work and maximize the impact.

Technical workshops consist of both classroom and field components. Teams take in-stream measurements, and then input the data to determine what best restoration practices would be ideal for mitigation. Workshops are geared toward engineers who will be doing the work, project managers, Watershed Management Coordinators, landowners, and other interested organizations, businesses, and state agencies. Graduates receive a certificate and will be eligible for the next level of training once it is developed.

### 2017 River Restoration Workshop Timeline:

- Attended Floodplain Restoration Workshop at McKnight Foundation Headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota (3/7/17)
- Co-hosted Floodplain Restoration Workshop with American Rivers at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls (3/30/17)
- Hosted three-day River Restoration Technical Workshop with IDNR in Des Moines (4/12/17 - 4/17/17)
- Hosted five-day Streambank Stabilization Technical Workshop with IDNR and ISWEP in Des Moines (10/30/17 - 11/3/17)

*“The River Roadshow has changed the way we talk about rivers with our elected officials. Traveling to different rivers around Iowa and getting to know local users and leaders helps IRR provide a more well-rounded, statewide perspective for decision-makers. A day on the river is never a day wasted.”*

*— Molly Hanson, Executive Director*

Fort Dodge River Roadshow



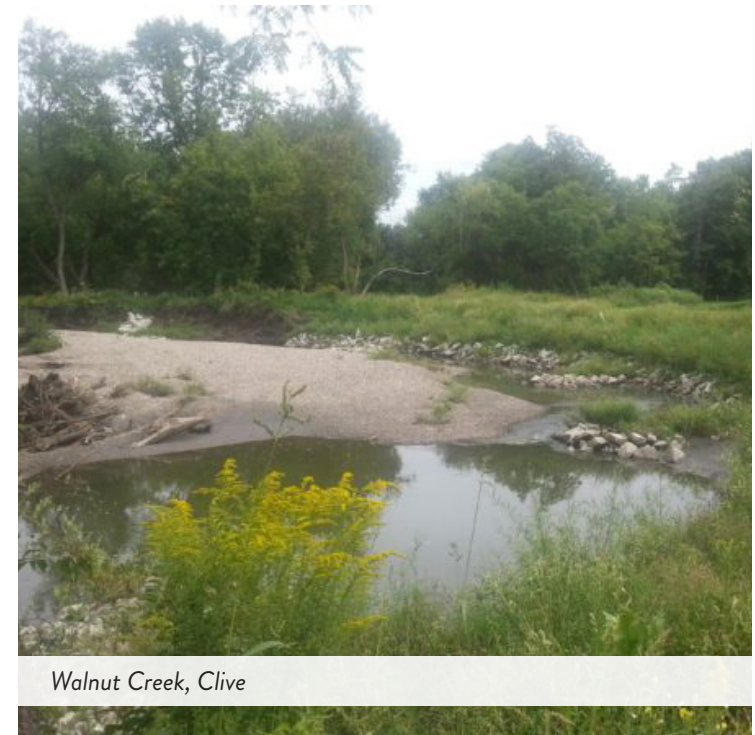
# River Town of the Year: Clive

A city without a river became our River Town of the Year in 2017! Clive is proud to call itself a creek town because Walnut Creek flows through it. Clive's appreciation for, and stewardship of, this creek in its midst has grabbed our attention and admiration.

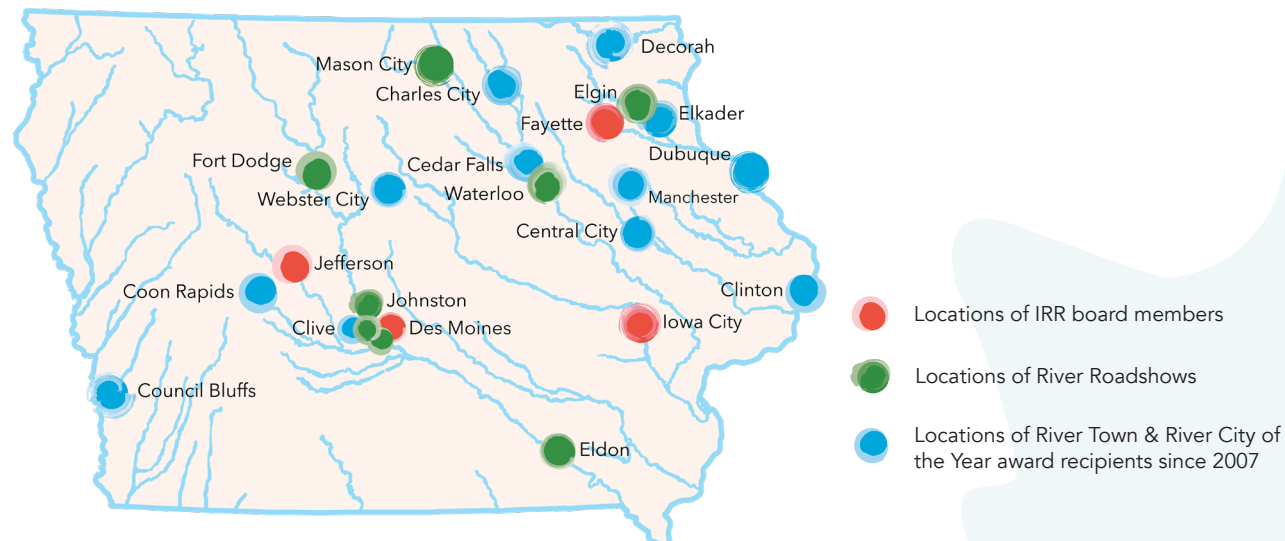
Walnut Creek is a defining element of the community. From its beginning, in the 1950s and '60s, Clive recognized that the Walnut Creek Greenbelt had great potential for recreation, parks, green space, and natural beauty. Greenbelt Park was established early on and became the dominant feature running through the middle of Clive. "Walnut Creek is a defining element of the community," said Molly Hanson, Executive Director. "Like other Iowa river cities we have recognized – from Dubuque to Council Bluffs, Charles City to Clinton – Clive is celebrating its past, present, and future with Walnut Creek."

Clive's accomplishments include:

- Stabilizing streambanks of Walnut Creek using state-of-the-art "bio-engineering" techniques instead of leaving steep, erodible banks, or "hard-armoring" banks with concrete "rip-rap."
- Adopt a watershed-wide approach and planning with all its neighbor communities.
- Acquire more floodplain acres to ensure adequate stream buffers and flood flow capacities.
- Invest \$80 million in public and private funds over 25 years in a Greenbelt Master Plan, more than half for environmental enhancements.
- Protect drinking water for 500,000 people – the Des Moines Water Works intake valve is located just a mile downstream from where Walnut Creek flows into the Raccoon River, not far below Clive.
- Lead the way in organizing technical training for communities on stream restoration strategies.
- Collaborate with resident volunteers who formed Green and Sustainable Clive to remove invasive species, plant trees, and clean up the creek.



Walnut Creek, Clive



"Being named as the 2017 Iowa River Town of the Year was humbling and truly inspiring. The physical characteristics of the Walnut Creek pale in comparison with the rivers of many previous winners, however, the water resources are no less worthy of stewardship and the City of Clive is very appreciative of the recognition of our efforts on Walnut Creek in the Clive Greenbelt."

— Doug Ollendike,  
Community Development Director,  
City of Clive



## Women for Water

Looking for opportunities to bring more voices to the table to discuss water issues in Iowa, three women from different organizations put their heads together in collaboration – resulting in a new project called Women for Water. With support from LUSH Cosmetics, IRR secured funding to bring circles of women together to talk about water. Along with Des Moines Water Works, the Iowa Environmental Council, and a steering committee of passionate volunteers, the group developed a logo, meeting kits, a website, and the following message:

***We have water quality problems in Iowa with local impacts, and we can work together to solve them.***

**Mission:** To empower women to advocate for clean water through their personal, shared stories and mutual support

**Vision:** Women united as change-makers for water quality

### **Guiding Principles:**

- As women, we have the right to preserve and protect our families, our communities, our land and our water
- The health of our water is fundamental to the health of Iowa
- Every child deserves access to clean water
- Women value a supportive environment to share their stories
- Diverse women enrich each other and the advocacy
- Inclusion and accessibility drive all facets of our work

Iowa Women for Water hosted the 2017 Gathering on November 17th and over 90 women from around the state attended. Join the movement by joining our Facebook Group or sign up through the website at [www.iowawomenforwater.org](http://www.iowawomenforwater.org).

## Support IRR!

*The generous contributions of our supporters have provided the foundation for Iowa Rivers Revival to develop priorities and programs to address problems and solutions concerning Iowa's rivers and streams. These funds have been used carefully and efficiently, and are essential to our growing effectiveness and impact. **Thank you!***

*You can make unrestricted gifts or gifts for a specific purpose to IRR. Gifts are tax-deductible. Visit [www.iowarivers.org](http://www.iowarivers.org) or contact us at 515.724.4093 or [info@iowarivers.org](mailto:info@iowarivers.org).*

## Master River Stewards Program

The Master River Stewards Program (MRSP) has become an important part of IRR's work. MRSP helps build a network of river advocates and experts within organizations, agencies, and communities across the state to protect and improve Iowa's rivers. In 2016, IRR was able to train certified MRSP instructors, who are making the program available to a larger audience! In 2017, we were able to offer support and guidance to three separate programs in Johnson, Story, and Buchanan Counties. IRR was excited to coordinate with these trained facilitators to offer more courses from more locations around Iowa. 2017 produced 39 graduates between the three Master River Stewards Programs and some amazing projects implemented back home.



## River Champions

River Champions are supporters who contribute \$250 a year or more to IRR, or raise \$250 from others. Being a “River Champion” means that you strongly support IRR’s efforts to mobilize Iowans to defend, protect, restore, and celebrate our rivers and streams. It’s a strong commitment to very important work.

### \$10,000 +

Lush Cosmetics  
The McKnight Foundation

### \$2,500 +

Charlotte and Fred Hubbell  
Trudy Hurd  
Iowa Foundation for Education  
Enviroment and the Arts  
Recreational Equipment, Inc.

### \$1,000 +

Beth Clayton  
Community Foundation of  
Greater Des Moines  
Barbara Farrow  
Robert and Susan Fleming  
Elizabeth Garst and Darwin  
Pierce  
Rachel Garst  
Sharon and Kyle Krause  
Terri and Chuck McNeley  
Mike Smith and Susan Seitz  
Dennis and Kristine Woodruff

### \$500 +

Mark and Susan Ackelson  
Linda Appelgate  
Sue Rutledge Brenton and  
J.C. Brenton  
Campbell’s Nutrition  
CanoeSport Outfitters  
Jacqueline Comito  
Nancy Crowfoot and John  
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David and Kathy Dorff  
Kate Garst  
Lori Hanson and Ralph Stowell  
HDR, Inc.  
Fred Heinz and Cheryl Ross  
Michael and Debbie Hubbell

### ISG

Matt Kaufman and Melissa  
Dale  
Peter Moore and Lisa Schulte  
Moore  
Mike Murphy  
Robert and Kay Riley  
Lynette Seigley  
Steve and Martha Stephenson

### \$250 +

Steve and Rachel Ballenger  
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Molly Hanson and Johnny  
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Donald Wall  
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Michael and Marne Woods  
Karen and Gary Youngberg

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Blank Park Zoo  
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Gerry Rowland and MC Scott  
Duane Sand  
Mark and Barb Schmidt  
Robert Sessions  
Skunk River Paddlers  
Luke Stadler  
Charmin Sterbenz





The growth and success of Iowa Rivers Revival is a direct result of the commitment and dedication of its supporters and volunteers. Together we can ensure healthier rivers for future generations.

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For more information about Iowa Rivers Revival,  
visit us at [www.iowarivers.org](http://www.iowarivers.org).

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