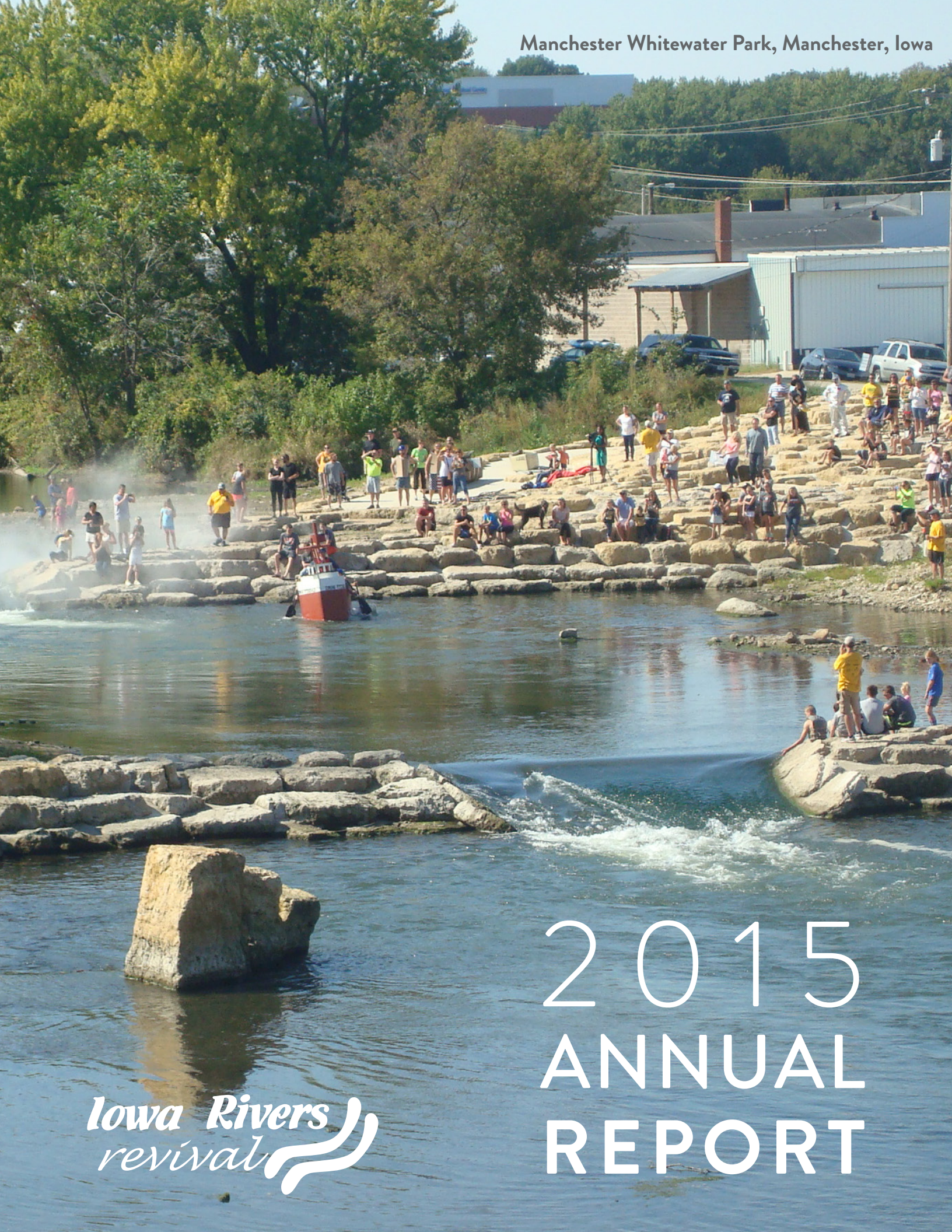


Manchester Whitewater Park, Manchester, Iowa



*Iowa Rivers
revival* 

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

2015 ACCOM

Outreach



Executive Director Rosalyn Lehman at the Hinterland Music Festival.



The "River Rascals" enjoy some time to play in the river.

- **In 2015, we had so many great applicants for our River Town of the Year award that we selected two!** Manchester was awarded River TOWN of the Year for its accomplishments in successful dam mitigation and economic impact with their new whitewater course. Council Bluffs was chosen as River CITY of the year for its outstanding efforts to renew their connection to the Missouri River through new parks and recreational trails, as well as their focus on water quality with area partners.
- **With the past success of our Master River Stewards Program, IRR started work on a "Train the Trainer" component.** Partnering with the Iowa DNR, Des Moines Waterworks, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Metro Waste Authority, IRR contracted with Dr. Jim Pease to develop a curriculum to certify new facilitators to present the program throughout Iowa.
- **This year was the 7th year for our River Rascals program.** Once again, we offered the program to 10 youth from the Children and Family Urban Movement. This is a fun and unique river experience. The children had a chance to learn about basic paddling skills, water safety, river biology/wildlife, and water quality. For many participants, this program is their first experience on the river. We could not run this program without all of our volunteers!
- **IRR was honored to head up the River Village at the first-ever Hinterland Music Festival in St. Charles.** At the two-day event — which drew over 14,000 people — the village featured an interactive stream table, dam model, fishing games for kids, and information about rivers and water quality. It gave concert-goers the opportunity to help create an original river-themed sculpture with local artists Ryk Weiss and Pam Dennis.

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.

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.

PLISHMENTS

Advocacy

- With increased challenges in securing funds through the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF), **IRR was still able to secure a \$1.75 million appropriation for Iowa's Low-Head Dam Mitigation and Water Trails Program.**
- An overwhelming majority of Iowa voters created the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund in 2010. **Along with a diverse group of organizations, agencies and individuals, IRR, as a part of the IWILL Coalition, continues to advocate for this trust to be funded.** It will provide a much-needed permanent and constitutionally-protected funding source for conserving and enhancing water quality and natural areas in Iowa.
- **Once again, IRR started 2015 with our annual Legislative Reception at Noodle Zoo.** The Legislative Reception serves as a gathering for Iowa's legislative leaders and river supporters to connect about Iowa's river issues and experiences. This year's event highlighted Manchester (River Town) and Council Bluffs (River City) of the Year.

Capacity Building

- **IRR celebrated 67 River Champions**, our program that recognizes donors who contribute \$250 or more annually.
- We were able to **increase our annual number of donors from 167 to 196** through various outreach and educational opportunities. We are so thankful for all of our supporters — we could not continue to grow without them.
- IRR was grateful to participate in both the **Whole Foods One Dime at a Time program and the Wheatfield Coop's Nickel Recipient Program.** Both stores offer local non-profits a chance to receive donations for every reusable grocery bag a customer uses.
- **IRR was pleased to have two new board members join us in 2015.** Art Kern and Chuck McNeley. Art and Chuck have been a wonderful additions to IRR.

financial summary

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

Carryover from 2014:	\$33,910.27
Total Income:	\$126,484.40
Total Expense:	\$123,945.70
Balance End of 2015:	\$36,448.97

“Our mission is to improve Iowa rivers by action and advocacy — and we are making an impact.”

— MOLLY HANSON,
IRR vice chair



Board Member Robin Fortney talks with Legislators at the Legislative Reception.



Advisor Jim Pease speaking with the P.A.L.S. paddling group at the home of Chuck and Terri McNeley.



Land tour at River Restoration Technical Training in Oakland.



Group at an Intro to River Restoration Meeting in Emerson.



One year after plantings at a Yellow River restoration project.



John Thomas (Golden Hills RC&D) talks to group at River Restoration Technical Training in Oakland.

RIVER RESTORATION TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

IRR hosts “How-To” meetings across Southwest Iowa, focusing on the Nishnabotna River.

IRR organized, coordinated and presented 10 “Introduction to River Restoration” meetings in the Nishnabotna watershed, over a 2-month period, reaching 85 area landowners, professionals, and concerned citizens. These meetings were conducted in partnership with Golden Hills RC&D (Resource Conservation & Development).

As a follow-up to these meetings, IRR offered a more advanced, technical workshop in the Nishnabotna watershed geared towards area river professionals. Nineteen people participated in the workshop, which included both classroom instruction and an on-site field component to observe completed and in-progress restoration projects in the area, with emphasis on nutrient reduction.

“I watched the ‘Intro to River Restoration’ webinar and was blown away by it. It has me thinking in a totally new way about Iowa’s rivers.”

— CONNIE MUTEL, program participant and

Senior Science Writer at the University of Iowa’s IIHR

IOWA LEARNING FARMS WEBINAR

Iowa Rivers Revival and Iowa DNR partner to educate landowners on the benefits of river restoration.

In the fall of 2015, IRR contracted with the Iowa Learning Farms to conduct listening sessions with two different focus groups: one in the Des Moines River watershed and one in the Nishnabotna River watershed. Jacqueline Comito, PhD with Iowa State Extension, presented her findings to the IRR board and provided her own synthesis and recommendations to better reach out to and connect with landowners.

As another facet of our partnership, IRR, in conjunction with the Iowa DNR, developed a river restoration webinar that was produced and published by the Iowa Learning Farms geared toward educating landowners on how river restoration improves water quality (by reducing bacteria and nutrients), reduces stream bank erosion, reduces flooding, improves habitat, and enhances economic development. This webinar was available live and is posted and available online.

RIVER TOWN OF THE YEAR

Manchester, Iowa

The Manchester Whitewater Park has enhanced safety along the river for recreation. It has restored the Maquoketa River to a more natural state, providing better fishing, more aquatic life, and a healthier, cleaner river. It's an investment that improves quality of life for the town and region.

"The new Whitewater Park is a tribute to Manchester's passion and dedication to reconnect residents and visitors to the Maquoketa River," said Jerry Peckumn, board chair of Iowa Rivers Revival.

The \$1.8 million whitewater project – **removing the nine-foot downtown dam, constructing six 18-inch drops and rocky pools over an 800-foot run, and enhancing the riverfront** – is finished after construction all winter. The Whitewater Park, right in the heart of town, is a recreational playground for citizens and visitors.



Whitewater course – Manchester, Iowa.

RIVER CITY OF THE YEAR

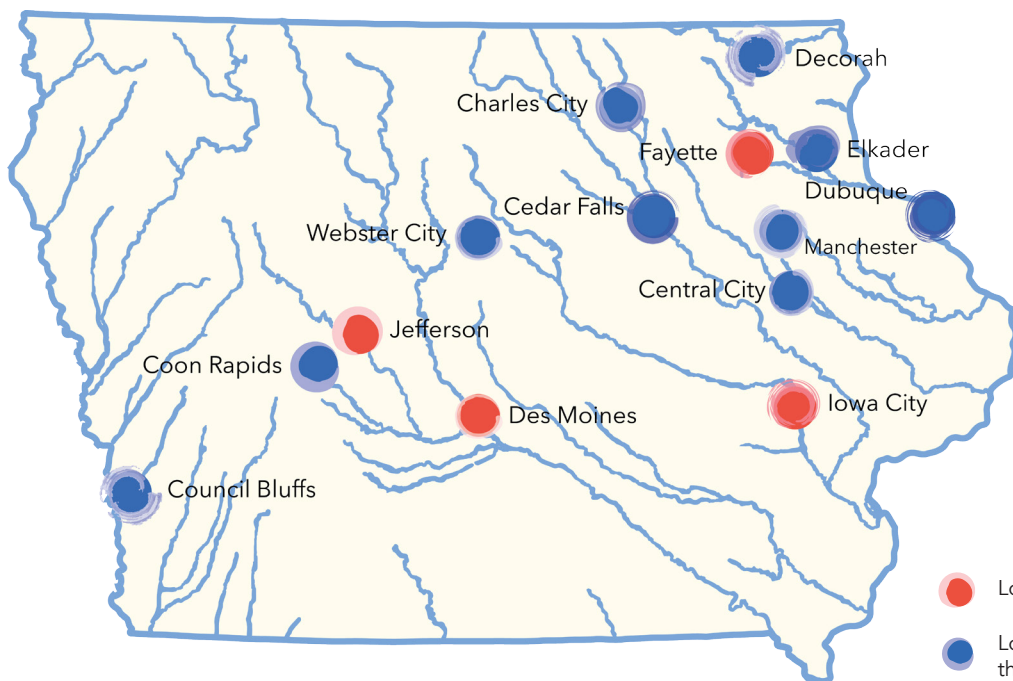
Council Bluffs, Iowa

"Council Bluffs' recipe includes strong vision, focused planning, and constant collaboration," said Roz Lehman, 2015 Executive Director of IRR. "The result is outstanding features and events that are bringing citizens and visitors back to the river to live and work and play. It's a model for communities all over Iowa."

Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park: Dedicated May 22, 2013, the 90-acre public park is located right on the riverfront, with a beautiful view of downtown Omaha across the Missouri. The new park already is bringing tens of thousands of people to the river for music and community events, public art, sightseeing, and recreation.



Fireworks over bridge – Council Bluffs, Iowa.



“Manchester is making the Maquoketa River the heart and soul of the community again, a focus for recreation, economic development, and environmental stewardship.”

— JERRY PECKUMN,
IRR board chair

● Locations of IRR board members

● Locations of River Town and River City of the Year award recipients since 2007

Saving Iowa's Turtles!

painted turtle



Turtles are at risk in Iowa

Iowa's wild turtle populations are at serious risk of falling to unsustainable levels due to overharvesting.

As surrounding states close or limit commercial turtle harvesting, this puts more pressure on the demand for Iowa's native, wild turtles, including the snapping, painted, spiny softshell and smooth softshell turtles.

Currently, there are no restrictions on harvesting these four species, and all are commercially harvested year-round.

Recommendation

Iowa's wild turtles should be protected during their mating and nesting season, from late winter through early summer.

IRR was one of several dedicated partners involved in stakeholder meetings for adopting statewide turtle harvest rules for Iowa. The response from reaching out to supporters led to many comments submitted to the DNR and Governor to assist the Natural Resource Commission in making an informed decision regarding rules for the future management of wild turtle populations.

snapping turtle



Turtle Biology:

- ❖ Female turtles require 7-10 years to reach reproductive maturity.
- ❖ Once mature, female turtles can continue to lay eggs for 50 years. Large, older turtles produce the largest and most eggs.
- ❖ Turtles are semi-aquatic and require both wetland and upland habitats for mating, reproduction, and nesting.
- ❖ A typical turtle nest has a 70% chance of being destroyed because of weather and flooding, natural predators, and unsafe locations, among other reasons.
- ❖ A snapping turtle may need to lay 1,400 eggs before one offspring reaches reproductive maturity.

Other pressures on Iowa's wild turtles:

- ❖ Predation. Mammals such as opossums, raccoons, coyotes, foxes, skunks, weasels, and dogs dig up most turtle nests. Studies show an average of 80% of turtle nests are destroyed by these predators.
- ❖ Habitat loss. Less than 5% of Iowa's pre-settlement wetland acres remain. Channelized streams, soil erosion, and water pollution impact turtle feeding, mating, and nesting opportunities.
- ❖ Weather and flooding. Female turtles lay their eggs in the spring and early summer in sandy areas generally near water, making their nests and hatchlings vulnerable to severe rain and floods.

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 efforts to mobilize Iowans to defend, protect, restore, and celebrate our rivers and streams. It's a strong commitment to very important work.

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*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. The 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. Go to iowarivers.org or contact Jenn Dreier at 515.724.4093 or info@iowarivers.org.

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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