



Polk County Supervisor Tom Hockensmith, Chair
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Paddling and pontoon tours feature Des Moines River history

The public is invited to a pair of history tours on the Des Moines River this month to learn how residents have interacted with this important natural resource over the past 150 years. Tours include:

Paddling Tour – 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, July 23. Meet at Birdland Park, 2100 Saylor Road, Des Moines. Shuttles to and launching from Prospect Park, 1225 Prospect Road, Des Moines. Lifejackets are required and will be provided. Pairing with experienced paddlers recommended. Register [here](#).

Pontoon Tour – 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, July 30. Meet at Birdland Park, 2100 Saylor Road, Des Moines. Shuttles to and launching from Prospect Park, 1225 Prospect Road, Des Moines. Space is limited. Register [here](#).

The tour guide and speaker for both tours will be John Wenck of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Each tour will feature the same content and include a stop for refreshments and a tour of the Curt Systma and Ellen King Huntoon House, a restored Victorian house with a beach on the river.

The tours are part of an effort to engage the public in a community conversation about the future of approximately 150 miles of creeks and rivers in central Iowa. A master plan for improving the water trails and nearby greenways in the Greater Des Moines region is being developed by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization on behalf of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Once complete, the master plan will provide a long-range regional vision for how individuals, governments and other organizations can collaborate to improve the region's waterways for better recreation, enhanced conservation and improved economic vitality.

Additional details about the planning process and community events can be found at dmampo.org/water-trails.

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.