



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Public invited to an art unveiling to kick off water trails plan

The public is invited to LAUNCH: Art at Water Works Park on Saturday, May 30, for a riverside unveiling of a temporary public art installation by New York-based artist Mary Mattingly that calls attention to the joy of reconnecting to our waterways. The featured speaker will be Iowa Department of Natural Resources Director Chuck Gipp at 1 p.m.

The event launches a regional water trails plan for improving the water trails and nearby greenways in the Greater Des Moines region. The plan is being developed by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization on behalf of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The plan will incorporate the Water Works Park Master Plan into a regional plan covering approximately 150 miles of creeks and rivers in central Iowa.

Three additional events are planned in May to kick off the water trails plan, including range of activities such as speakers and paddling excursions. A list of upcoming activities is included below. Additional details about the planning process, the launch and community events can be found at [dmampo.org/water-trails](http://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.

## Upcoming Events and Outings

***Hudson Bay Bound – 7 p.m. Thursday, May 28, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines***

Paddler Natalie Warren, who with Ann Raiho became the first women to paddle the 2,250 miles from Minneapolis to Hudson Bay in 2011, will speak about their trip and lessons learned.

***Your Community from a Paddler's Perspective – 7:30 a.m. Friday, May 29, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines***

Paddler Natalie Warren, founder of Wild River Academy and a national speaker on the relationships between rivers and communities, will focus this talk on how nurturing water ways can spur community development.

***Paddling the Des Moines River – 1 p.m. Friday, May 29, Des Moines River, launching at the Sycamore Access of NW 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Johnston***

Join Natalie Warren for a six-mile paddling trip from the Sycamore Access to Prospect Park. The trip will take between two and three hours depending on water levels. Wear clothes and shoes that can get wet and dirty, bring sun screen and a water bottle. If you wish to bring personal items such as wallet, cell phone, camera and keys, a dry bag is recommended. While this is considered a safe route, being on the river always poses some risk. Life jackets are required. New paddlers are recommended to come with an experienced paddler and share a canoe. Trip co-sponsored with Department of Natural Resources and Des Moines Parks and Recreation. Space is limited, so reserve your spot here: <http://goo.gl/forms/BjrU9qfYUJ>.

***LAUNCH: Art at Water Works Park – 1 p.m. Saturday, May 30, Water Works Park (near the pedestrian bridge), Des Moines***

The public is invited to the unveiling of a temporary, interactive public art piece being installed on the Raccoon River by artist Mary Mattingly. The unveiling will occur as part of a day of activities from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Water Works Park, including speakers at 1 p.m. with remarks from artist Mary Mattingly and DNR Director Chuck Gipp.

LAUNCH is a new annual event aimed at drawing new and current users into Water Works Park to explore its many recreational opportunities. The free event opens at 11 a.m. and features a range of activities, music, food trucks and the Iowa Beer Tent in "The Village" in the Denman Woods area of the Park until 6 p.m. Visit <http://www.launch.dmwwpf.org/> for the schedule of activities. The Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department will offer float trips starting at the pedestrian bridge at 11 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. and each last approximately 30 minutes.

LAUNCH is sponsored by Scheels, Veridian Credit Union, and Des Moines Water Works Park Foundation. The public art work is sponsored by Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation, the Iowa Arts Council and the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

***Central Iowa Rivers: What Lies Beneath – 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 3, Water Works Park, Des Moines***

Have you ever wondered what is swimming in Iowa rivers? Join us as Andy Otting and Ben Dodd of Iowa Department of Natural Resources bring several species of fish that reside in the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers and talk about how we as humans impact their life cycle. In addition, Jennifer Kurth of Iowa DNR will discuss the life history of our native mussels. This event is informational as well as a fun for families.