

News & Updates from  
Des Moines Water Works  
**MAY 2019**

# H<sub>2</sub>O LINE

**THINK DOWNSTREAM**

## Think Downstream

It's a simple fact that everyone knows: water flows downstream. As water travels downstream, it also brings with it many other things along the way like soil, debris, and other contaminants.

Des Moines Water Works is encouraging everyone to Think Downstream and is leading by example. For more than 25 years, Des Moines Water Works has been issued a permit to discharge the waste from its Nitrate Removal Facility back into the Raccoon River. Over the past few years, Des Moines Water Works has worked with regulators at Iowa DNR and staff at Des Moines Metropolitan Wastewater Reclamation Authority (WRA) on a process to divert nitrate waste from entering the Raccoon River at the Fleur Drive plant, to the WRA for treatment.

Construction and testing for a \$2.5 million project, including piping and a pump station to transport nitrate waste to the WRA, are now complete. Moving forward, when the Nitrate Removal Facility is in operation, the WRA will receive DMWW's nitrate removal waste, where the nitrate will be treated through controlled biological environments within the WRA facility. In addition, a beneficial reuse product called biosolids is produced for land application on agricultural fields in the Des Moines River Watershed (Polk and Jasper Counties).

"Investing in multi-million-dollar capital improvements to enhance treatment processes is one solution to deal with pollution in our source waters; however, improved upstream land use practices is the best solution to reduce nutrient concentrations in downstream drinking water sources," said Ted Corrigan, Interim CEO and General Manager, Des Moines Water Works. "All Iowans need to take responsibility for improving Iowa's water quality. We encourage everyone to Think Downstream and consider what they may do to help make Iowa's water safe for drinking and recreation."



*City of Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, Des Moines Water Works Interim CEO and General Manager Ted Corrigan, and Des Moines Public Works Assistant Director—WRA Scott Hutchens at the commissioning of the new \$2.5 million pump station and pipe that will take the waste from the Nitrate Removal Facility to the WRA for further treatment.*

This past Earth Day, Des Moines Water Works hosted City of Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, city and utility staff at the Fleur Drive Treatment Plant for the commissioning of the nitrate removal waste pump station and pipe.

"Both Des Moines Water Works and Des Moines WRA consider and view this venture as a major step towards environmental stewardship and are fully committed to the positive results it will yield: safe drinking water for central Iowa with a major reduction of contaminants being discharged back into our waterways that flow downstream to the next community," said Scott Hutchens, Director, Des Moines Metropolitan Wastewater Reclamation Authority.

# Boat Permits for Maffitt Reservoir



*The pump station at Maffitt Reservoir.*

**C**anoe, kayak and paddleboard enthusiasts are invited to enjoy the beautiful water and views at Maffitt Reservoir and Park. Interested users must purchase an annual permit to launch their watercraft at Maffitt Reservoir. The annual boat permit can be purchased for \$20.00 at Des Moines Water Works' General Office, located at 2201 George Flagg Parkway, in Des Moines. No motors or sails of any kind are allowed, which helps ensure the lake remains a high quality water source for the area's drinking water supply.

Dale Maffitt Reservoir is a 200-acre lake that sits among the tall oaks. The lake, primarily located in Polk County, also has corners that reach into Warren, Dallas and Madison Counties. The reservoir was constructed in the early 1940s, as a backup water source and named in honor of then-General Manager of Des Moines Water Works, Dale Maffitt. For decades, nature lovers and anglers have enjoyed the serenity of the lake, as ducks, geese, river otter and a multitude of fish species call it home. Today, Des Moines Water Works owns and maintains nearly 1,500 acres that comprise Dale Maffitt Reservoir and Park, maintains the land surrounding the lake in an effort to protect the watershed. In 2000, Des Moines Water Works began operating the L.D. McMullen Water Treatment Plant at Maffitt Reservoir, producing up to 25 million gallons per day for Des Moines and surrounding areas.

For more information on the use of canoes, kayaks and paddleboards at Maffitt Reservoir and other Park Rules, please contact Des Moines Water Works at (515) 283-8700 or visit [www.dmww.com/parks-events/maffitt-reservoir](http://www.dmww.com/parks-events/maffitt-reservoir).

## In Tribute: Bill Stowe

**B**ill Stowe dedicated his life to public service, most recently serving as CEO and General Manager of Des Moines Water Works. He began his tenure at the utility in 2012, and stayed in that post until illness forced him to retire on April 2, 2019. Stowe was a dedicated and well-liked leader who met the numerous challenges of running central Iowa's water utility. He was a visible and vocal advocate for environmental protection, public health, social justice and water quality in our state, frequently stating: "Iowa is in a water quality crisis, and agriculture is the prime contributor to the crisis. If you don't start from the point this is a crisis; you're missing our point."

Graham Gillette, Des Moines Water Works Board of Trustee, delivered a eulogy for Stowe, reflecting, "Bill was committed to the struggle for equality, fairness, clean water, environmental reform, and restoring the rights of the silenced."



Stowe tasked his fellow Des Moines Water Works colleagues to challenge the status quo throughout the utility. "He set Des Moines Water Works on a course using better planning and sound management practices to create a safer, more trusting environment," said Gillette.

Stowe's Des Moines Water Works accomplishments include the following:

- Commitment to capital improvement planning, long range planning and reinvestment in water infrastructure;
- Emphasis on employee safety, training and development – under Stowe's leadership, the utility created a first-of-its-kind Water Production Apprenticeship program with 12 Des Moines Water Works graduates;
- Formation of the Des Moines Water Works Park Foundation and support for the Water Works Master Plan updates;
- Commitment to central Iowa water regionalization discussions;
- Strengthened AFSCME union relations – Gillette stated in Stowe's eulogy, "Bill understood how important it was for workers to stand together. He developed a management style rooted in the firm belief that we are stronger when we work in concert."

Stowe was proud of his work with the Des Moines Water Works Board and staff. In his letter announcing his retirement as CEO and General Manager, Stowe said, "It was one of the high honors of my life to be entrusted to lead Des Moines Water Works. I have thoroughly enjoyed and relished being a part of the great team of employees that assures central Iowa customers have access to safe, affordable and reliable drinking water."

Iowans and all concerned about water quality and the environment lost Stowe's articulate and robust voice. "He was willing to shoulder criticism, to do what was right because doing so was in the interests of generations to come and the planet," said Gillette.

Perhaps Stowe's final challenge to us is to continue the vigorous but respectful debate he launched to advocate for Iowa becoming a clean water state. If we agree Iowa's declining water quality is unacceptable, and use our voices, Stowe's challenge will not be lost.