



2005 Annual Report

This year began with 13 Iowans receiving whitewater canoe and kayak instruction at the Missouri Whitewater Association Clinic on the St. Francis River in April, and ended with a public viewing of the board-volunteered production of IWC's video *Reconnecting the Rivers*—that presents the problem of low-head dams on Iowa's rivers and a specific solution to the two dams downtown Des Moines.

Other paddling endeavors included an adventurous trip to class III rapids at Brigg's Falls near Webster City where senior boaters assisted newbie boaters with skills and lots of encouragement! That trip also took in a class II/III rapids on the historic Soldier's Creek near Fort Dodge. Paddlers also enjoyed the Winnebago River in Mason City, and a nice long weekend trip to Wisconsin's Wolf River. Skilled paddlers assisted the less-skilled at both Tuesday Nights at Gray's Lake and Swiftwater Thursdays at Commerce Ledges--a set of natural rapids just outside of West Des Moines.

Safety and rescue skills were honed July 23-24 when IWC hosted an ACA certified Swiftwater Rescue Clinic, bringing in instructors from Arkansas, and a student who drove all the way from Chicago. 12 Students learned how to tie a variety of life saving knots, how to rescue victims in life-threatening situations, and how not to become a victim. Although the temperature soared to 105 degrees both days, all thought it was an excellent learning experience.

IWC is about a lot more than just paddling. It's a group who values our natural environment, increased water quality, and the safety of those who recreate on or near Iowa's rivers. IWC joined forces with Central Iowa Paddlers, Skunk River Paddlers, and Prairie Rapids Paddlers to support higher boat registration fees, an effort which led to the creation of a DNR Water Trails position that will address the lack of safety measures at Iowa dams.

IWC also held two cleanup efforts at Commerce Ledges on the Raccoon River where tires, trash, and steel was removed from a large area near the natural access paddlers use to get to the rapids. Many IWC members participated in other clean-up events hosted by other groups, including the DNR's Project Aware.

IWC worked with community leaders to fund a \$50,000 feasibility study that will look into the creation of a whitewater course and find solutions for the two dangerous low-head dams downtown Des Moines.

The IWC board members are excited about the year to come. Our first strategic plan and was created in June, and board members have written grants to further the *Reconnecting the Rivers* campaign. IWC plans on focusing greater efforts toward outreach and education, and work towards modifying or removing 14 dams in four target areas where water trails are proposed or are being considered.



PO Box 65453, West Des Moines, IA 50265
www.iowawhitewater.org 515-274-5660