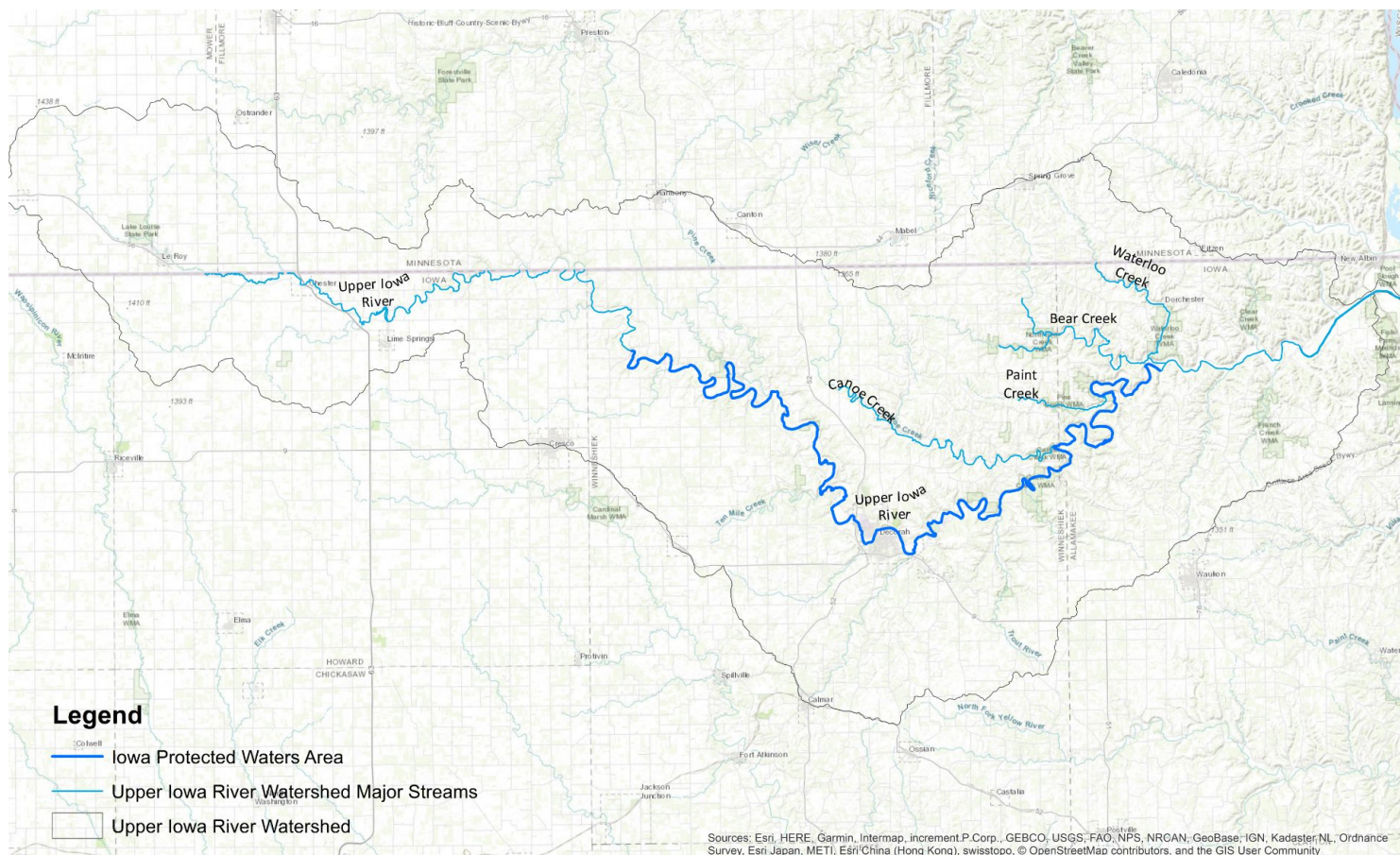


Stream, River and Watershed Designations

*This story was made with Esri's Story Map Journal.
Read the interactive version on the web at <https://arcg.is/1nenCW>.*

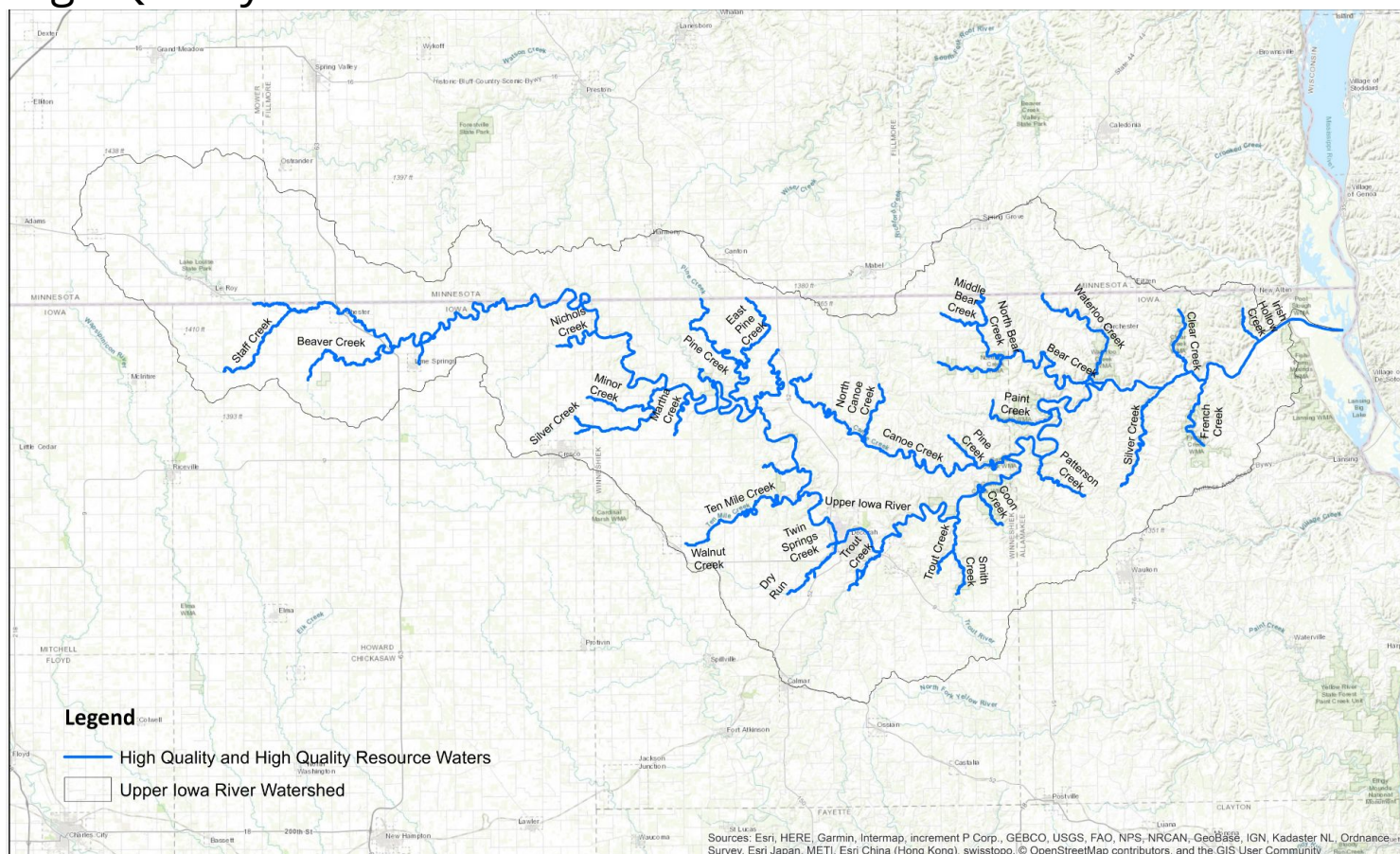


Iowa Protected Water Areas



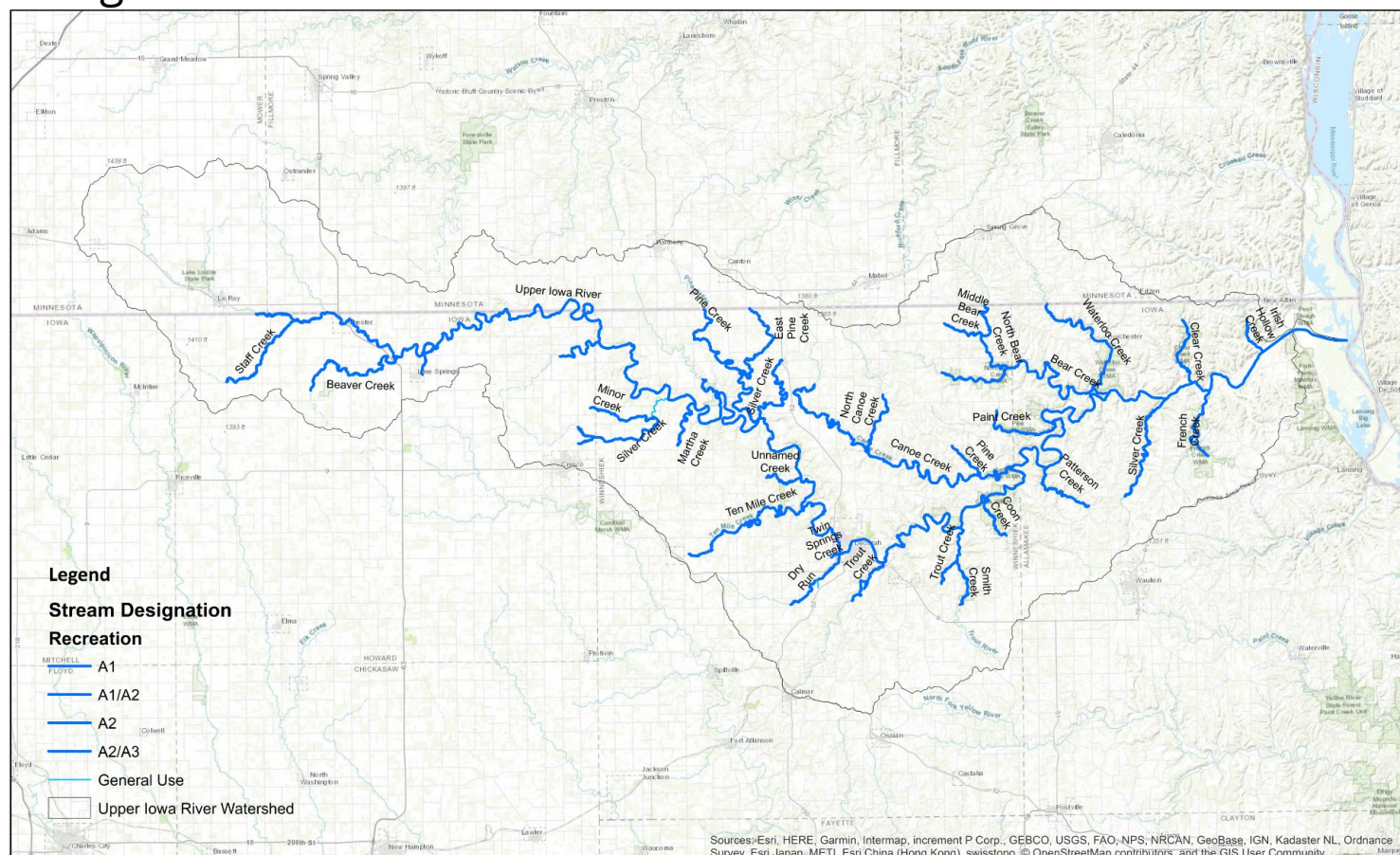
Over 73 miles of the Upper Iowa River is designated as an Iowa Protected Waters Area (PWA). According to the Iowa DNR, the PWA program is intended to, *"maintain, preserve and protect outstanding natural and scenic qualities of select waters and their adjacent land areas"*. Sections of only five Iowa rivers have been selected for designation as PWAs, including a 73.4-mile section of the Upper Iowa River from Kendallville in Winneshiek County to Highway 76 in Allamakee County. The Upper Iowa River is the only PWA in the Paleozoic Plateau or Driftless Area Landform of Iowa. According to the Iowa DNR, 28% of Iowa Resource Enhancement and Protection funding is allocated annually for state acquisition and development of lands and waters and *"One-twentieth of the 28% is available to the PWA program, which acquires land along designated PWA rivers to maintain their scenic and natural qualities"*. In part due to the Iowa REAP program, in 2019, 9,431 acres adjacent to the UIR and major streams are in public ownership by state or county entities. Over 978 additional public acres are owned by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, who manages those acres along with other private lands for preservation and in some cases with the intent that they be transferred to public ownership.

High Quality Waters



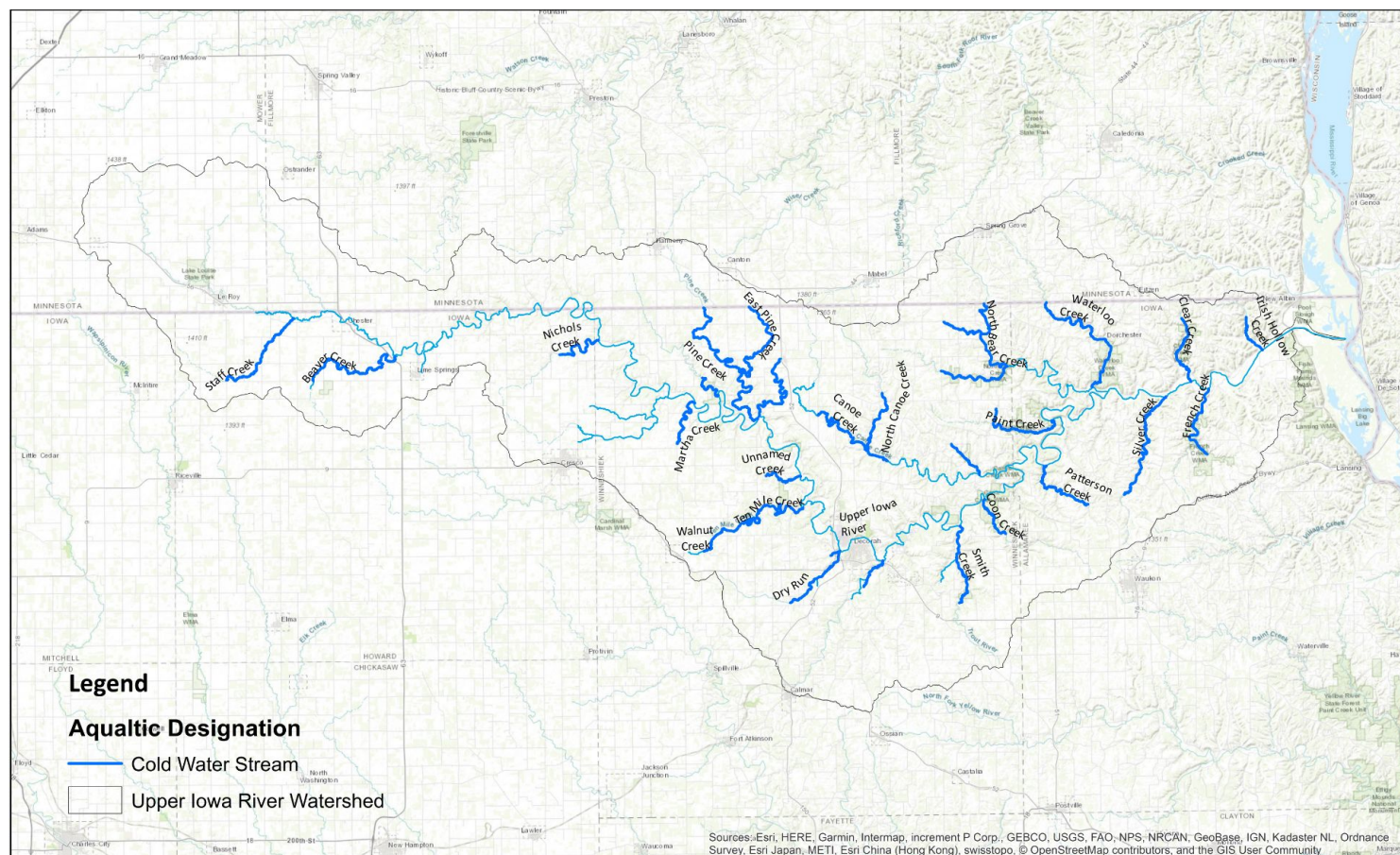
The Upper Iowa River Watershed has 60.6 miles of High Quality Waters (HQ) and 183.9 miles of High Quality Resource Waters. According to the Iowa DNR, High Quality Waters demonstrate *"exceptionally better quality than the levels specified in the Water Quality Standards"* and have *"exceptional recreational and ecological importance."* The Iowa DNR notes that, *"Special protection is warranted to maintain the unusual, unique or outstanding physical, chemical, or biological characteristics which these waters possess."* According to the Iowa DNR, *"High Quality Resource Waters (HQR) are waters of substantial recreational or ecological significance which possess unusual, outstanding or unique physical, chemical, or biological characteristics which enhance the beneficial uses and warrant special protection."*

Designation for Recreational Use



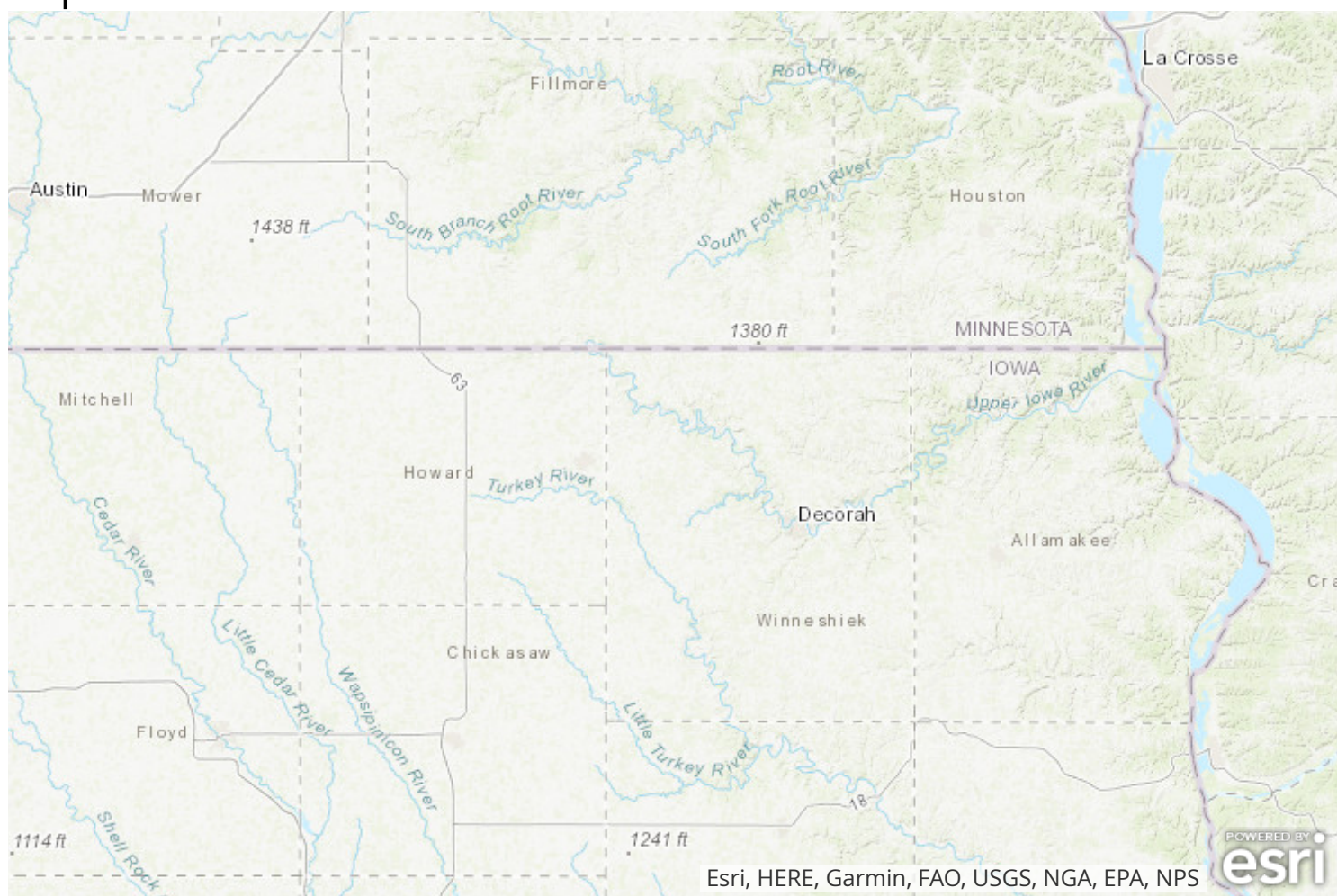
The Upper Iowa River Watershed contains over 175 miles of Class A Waters designated for recreational use or other uses that may result in direct or indirect contact with the water. Tens of thousands of residents and visitors annually utilize the Upper Iowa River and its corridor for recreational activities including canoeing, kayaking, fishing, tubing, wildlife watching, camping and other activities. Dozens of businesses on and near the river are dependent on their clients and customers being able to access water recreation, including canoe liveries, guides, convenience stores, campgrounds and others.

Cold Water Streams



The Upper Iowa River Watershed boasts 152 miles of Cold Water Stream segments, more designated cold water resources than any other HUC 8 watershed in Iowa. Designated cold water streams are defined by the State of Iowa as, “waters in which the temperature and flow are suitable for the maintenance of a variety of cold water species, including reproducing and non-reproducing populations of trout (*Salmonidae* family) and associated aquatic communities.” These coldwater streams are accessible and open to fishing year-round as weather and flow permit. The watershed contains an additional 159.2 miles of Warm Water Stream segments, which are considered a significant resource for warm water aquatic life (BWW), and 23.8 miles of stream designated as limited resource for water aquatic life (BLR).

Impaired Waters



Over 300 miles of streams and rivers in the Upper Iowa River Watershed were listed on Iowa's Section 303(d) Impaired Waters Listings in 2016. According to Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act, every other year, each state is required to submit a list of waters for which state water quality standards will not be met based on what they are used for, or their specific designations. The listing includes waters that are considered impaired by point and non-point sources of pollutants. Because of the level of impairment on the streams and river segments listed in the Upper Iowa River, development of a total maximum daily load (TMDL) is required. Impairment also helps local Soil and Water Conservation Districts qualify for specific state and federal funding to help improve water quality.

For more information about each of the impaired streams in Iowa, view [Iowa's 303\(d\) list of impaired waters](#). (*After clicking the link search "UIA" for all the Upper Iowa River Watershed stream segments listed in the Iowa DNR's Impaired waters list.)