



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Le Mars fish kill likely came from local business

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LE MARS—After looking for the cause of a fish kill in a small stream west of Le Mars Thursday afternoon, DNR traced the source to a local industry that uses ammonia as a refrigerant.

The spill appears to be cooling water discharge from Wells Blue Bunny's north plant. Normally the storm water discharge would not have ammonia in it, but DNR found elevated levels of ammonia below their discharge pipe.

There were several hundred dead minnows and chubs in the unnamed creek, but no obvious issues in the nearby Floyd River.

DNR recommends children and pets stay away from the creek near the ball park south of Highway 3 for at least 24 hours.

“This is a reminder to everyone that what you pour down a storm sewer or into a street goes directly to a creek and not to the wastewater plant,” said Ken Hessenius, supervisor of the Spencer DNR office. “Some household chemicals which are flushed to sanitary sewers can be harmful to wastewater treatment plants. So be careful what you pour down the drain—sanitary or storm sewer.”

DNR will continue to look for and verify the spill source, and send water samples for laboratory analysis. DNR fisheries staff will do a fish kill count today.

See [“Where does Water go”](#) for more information on what happens to storm water or wastewater and how to safely dispose of hazardous chemicals.