

STATE SOIL CONSERVATION & WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE
Monthly Meeting, Wednesday, February 26th 2020, 9:00 A.M
Wallace Building Conference, Conference Room 2

Minutes for February 26th, 2020

SSCWQC Members Present

Kevin Pope, Paula Ellis, Steve Hofmann, Sherman Lundy, Patti Ruff

SSCWQC Members Called In

Colleen Miller, Dale Farnham

DSCWQ Staff Present

Jake Hansen, Will Myers, Lori Lewis

Partners Present

Kurt Simon (NRCS), Steve Hopkins (DNR), Jamie Benning (ISU)

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

2020-11 Lundy moved to approve the agenda; Hofmann seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2020-12 Lundy moved to approve the January 22nd, 2020 meeting minutes; Ruff seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bureau Chief Reports (Reports on file)

Field Services - Myers

Myers introduced the Field Services, Field representatives to the committee; Michelle Timmer, Bobby Kuennen, and Angie Sebastian. Meyers shared which areas each representative oversees and gave a brief history on each. (Field Reps left meeting after introductions).

Mines and Minerals - Sitzmann

Sitzmann was unable to attend the meeting Hansen highlighted the following topics in his report;

- Staff investigated a sinkhole in Mahaska County, likely caused by mining. Will be working with a contractor to mitigate the sinkhole.

Water Resources - Hansen

Hansen highlighted the following topics in his report;

- There are 23 remaining wells that are registered with the DNR to be addressed. Legislature appropriated \$1.875 Million for ADW closure again for 2020.
- Water Resources hired three new ES's (Environmental Specialist)
 - Carrie Tolzin; North Raccoon Watershed, Storm Lake
 - Rose Danaher; Benton-Tama NRS Watershed, Vinton
 - Colton Meyer; Floyd River Watershed, Orange City

Director's Report - Kozak

Kozak was unable to attend the meeting. Hansen highlighted the following items in her report;

- Ryan Starkey was February's Employee of the month. Ryan works in the Mines and Minerals Bureau as a Environmental Specialist and has been with IDALS for 5 years.
- Kozak and Kate Bussanmas attended the NACD meeting in Las Vegas.
- Sign-up is now closed for the WQI Cover Crop program.
- Urban WQI Projects-IDALS received 13 apps for a total asking of \$1.2M. Apps are currently under review with an anticipated start date of April 1, 2020.
- Watershed Implementation Projects- Seven contracts have been approved for continuation (see report for list)

Partner Reports (Reports on file)

Conservation Districts of Iowa - Whitaker

- Report included in the packet. Will review at joint meeting

Engineers – Roehl

Roehl was unable to attend, no report sent.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Hopkins

Hopkins highlighted the following topics in his report;

- Josh Balk was hired as the new Eastern Iowa Basin Coordinator. Balk was previously the Black Hawk SWCD Dry Run Creek Watershed Project Coordinator. Balk will be replacing Mary Beth Stevenson.
- Hopkins reviewed the DNR 2019 Program Summary handout that he provided to the committee (Summary on file)

Iowa State Extension – Benning

Benning highlighted items in her report;

- ISU Extension recently had two press releases; one in regards to research and evaluation of days spent on field work and one in regards to the success of the “Water Rocks” program.
- The list of upcoming webinars, workshop and conferences were reviewed with the committee
- The proceedings from the Crop Advantage Series are now posted on the Extension Store, each presenter has put in a summary of their research presentations at the 14 meeting held around the state.

Leopold Center – Farnham

Nothing to Report.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Simon

Verbal report only;

- Simon will be giving a 7 point slide presentation at the following joint meeting pertaining to the NRCS reorganization.
- The committee was introduced to Dr. Scott Cagle, who will be the new Assistant State Conservationist (Partnerships) replacing Marty Atkins.
- NRCS has received their budget and Simon shared that it is the best one they have had in years.
- NRCS was recently allocated another 100 positions, so as of today they have 241 positions that are in a stage of the hiring process.
- RCCP is a standalone program for the first time ever.
- Traditionally NRCS has had a drill rig in the state, one that was very old and required a license to operate. They now will be getting rid of this drill rig and purchasing a new one that is much smaller, much more efficient, and does not require a license to operate. Currently NRCS is looking for a place to store this rig, preferable in Central Iowa.

Business

- SSCWQC Research and Demonstration Grant Updates - Gubbels
 - Lewis shared that Gubbels has provided an update on all current grants in the report included in the packet.
- Review Soil Loss Amendments
 - Pope shared that Polk County will be proposing an alternative to the recommended soil loss values. Myers informed the committee that these changes will be reviewed and discussed in an upcoming District Operations Subcommittee meeting.

2020-13 Lundy moved to approve the proposed soil loss amendments; Hofmann seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Subcommittee Reports - None

SWCD Vacancies / Appointments

- Appointments
 - Kossuth – Recommendation to appoint Billie Wille to fill the unexpired term of Sara Pearson.

2020-14 Lundy moved to approve the appointment listed above; Miller seconded. Approved unanimously.

SSCWQC Member Reports

- Ruff- Via her job Ruff shared that the Source Water Protection Program at Strawberry Point has started and because of that the 2018 Farm Bill had funding for Source Water Protection so there are some extra things that the land owners inside of that capture zone will have available to them for things such as cover crops. Pattison Sand Co. of Clayton, a local Sand Mine submitted an application to the Iowa DNR to sell water from the Jordan Aquifer to the western States. This was unique in nature, and thankfully it was declined quickly thus protecting Iowa water. The Jordan Aquifer is a 100 ft. well and they were proposing originally to pump out 2 Billion gallons a year, and ship it west for animal consumption. There was an article pertaining to this in the Capital Dispatch.
- Hofmann- It has been pretty quiet in the area, they are seeing frost on the open ground still. Tomorrow marks the end of the CRP contract, it started off slow but toward the end things picked up very quickly.
- Lundy- People in the area are anxious to start their spring farming season. Since the weather has been strange we are seeing some ground that is still frozen and some that is thawed affecting some projects in the area.

- Ellis- In mid-March Ellis will be helping with a Women Caring for the Land Project. At the end of March there will be another project she will be assisting on as well as the upcoming Spring Regional.
- Miller- A cover crop seminar is coming up with Doug Peterson. Farm to market roads are monitoring for road conditions.
- Farnham- There is a lot of snow melting right now. Not a lot of farming is happening yet while we wait for spring.
- Pope- There is still a lot of snow on the ground. Tile outlets have run all winter. The rivers are trying to freeze but the weather has been inconsistent, and we will hopefully be heading into spring with an empty soil profile.

Adjournment

Pope adjourned the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

Kevin Pope, SSCWQC Chair

Susan Kozak, DSCWQ Division Director