

## Minutes for December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### SSCWQC Members Called In/Present

Steve Hofmann, Dennis Carlson, Paula Ellis, Colleen Miller, Mike McGhee, Angela Rosol, John Tuthill

### DSCWQ Staff

Jake Hansen, Vince Sitzmann, Kate Bussanmas, Will Myers, Nicky McEuen

### Partners Present

Dien Judge (CDI), Jeri Thornsberry (CDI), Catherine Delong (ISU), Carlee Sabus (CDI), Steve Hopkins (DNR), Jon Hubbert (NRCS), Patrick Chase (NRCS)

Carlson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2023-27** Rosol moved to approve the agenda with the amendment to add the commissioner recommendation in Butler County; Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**2023-28** Miller moved to approve the October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting minutes; Rosol seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### Bureau Chief Reports (Reports on file)

#### Field Services –Myers

Myers highlighted the following topics in his report;

- FY2024 cost share programs have been provided to districts and supplemental funds have been distributed
- IDALs has been approved to hire on 20 summer interns in 2024
- Myers pointed out the multiple updates in the field office staffing

#### Mines and Minerals – Sitzmann

Sitzmann highlighted the following topics in his report;

- There are currently 8 active construction projects, 16 projects in preliminary/final design (private consultants), and 3 in preliminary/final design (in-house design)
- Tasha Cline (Environmental Specialist) has resigned, and we will be looking to fill her vacant position
- The team recently finalized engineering contacts with engineering firms for 9 new AML projects

#### Water Resources - Hansen

Hansen highlighted the following topics in his report;

- 44 proposed sites have been rejected by landowners or cancelled due to other issues. Staff are reviewing site assessments and landowner feedback to determine if adjustment is needed
- 7 batch & build projects with agreements are in place with 5 more in the planning stages
- We are currently trying to fill two vacant positions, an Environmental Specialist as well as a new Environmental Engineer Senior position. We hope to have these filled soon

#### Director's Report – Kozak

Kozak highlighted the following topics in her report;

- Kozak was unable to attend the meeting as she was due to attend the Hypoxia Task Force meeting in Arkansas. Report was included in the packet

### Partner Reports (Reports on file)

#### Conservation Districts of Iowa - Judge

Judge provided an oral report only;

- CDI will have 25 new employees
- There have been 9 interviews done with 3 job offers extended
- Staff has been working on planning for Partnership Day and Spring Regionals

#### Engineers – Vacant

No Report

#### Iowa Department of Natural Resources –Hopkins

Hopkins highlighted the following topics in his report;

- EPA requires the state to update its NPS program plan every 5 years to remain eligible for the EPA 319 grant. A completed version of the draft NPS Management Plan is now available for review

- Iowa will hold its first deer hunting gun season beginning on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to December 6<sup>th</sup>

#### Iowa State Extension – DeLong

DeLong provided an oral report only;

- The Crop Advantage Series in January will cover farm management
- Driftless Region Beef Conference will be held in Dubuque, Iowa on January 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>
- The Iowa State Extension has welcomed a new State Forage Specialist as well as a new Agricultural Climatologist

#### Natural Resources Conservation Service – Hubbert

Hubbert provided an oral report only;

- Hubbert shared and reviewed the 2023 At a Glance
- NRCS will receive additional funding through the Inflation Reduction Act next year
- Iowa has 5 new RCCP projects and 81 nationally

#### Business (Discussion & possible action)

- Review Soil Loss Limit code/rule language and proposed modifications to procedures – for awareness, no action needed at this time.

#### Subcommittee Reports

- **Planning & Programs** – CDI Resolution Review and Recommendation
  - **Increase Cover Crop Cost Share for Previous Users** – The subcommittee agreed with the concept and supports IDALS continuing to explore possible solutions for this issue.

**2023-29** Hofmann moved to approve the above CDI resolution; Tuthill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Change Policy Within Historic Preservation Act** – The subcommittee agrees with this concern and supports CDI elevating the concern to NACD and other national levels.

**2023-30** Tuthill moved to approve the above CDI resolution; McGhee seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Revise Rules for Bioreactors, Saturated Buffers, and Wetland Restoration on Conservation Reserve Program Acres** – The subcommittee does not recommend IDALS action on this resolution. Further clarification is needed on this resolution and might need to be discussed with Farm Service Agency staff.
  - The committee agreed with the subcommittee to not support this resolution
- **Make (580) Stream Bank Protection an Eligible Practice for Funding Under the SF 512 Program** – The subcommittee does not recommend IDALS action on this resolution. CDI should check with the ISU Nutrient Research Center for status of this becoming an approved practice under the Nutrient Reduction Strategy. In order for IDALS to expend WQI funds, a practice must be approved by the Center.
  - The committee agreed with the subcommittee to not support this resolution
- **Increase the Minimum and Maximum Salary Range for State Soil Conservation Technicians** – The committee agrees with this concern and supports IDALS ongoing efforts to find solutions to the situation.

**2023-31** Miller moved to approve the above CDI resolution; Tuthill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

#### SWCD Vacancies / Appointments (Discussion & possible action)

- Madison- Recommendation to appoint Don Eyerly Jr. to fill the unexpired term of Lisa Coverdale (approved last meeting but missed 10-day window for appointment)
- Butler – Recommendation to appoint Rick Juchems to fill the unexpired term of Clay Reints

**2023-32** McGhee moved to approve the new commissioner appointments listed above. Miller seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

#### SSCWQC Member Reports

- Rosol- This is our first year with our Prairie Grass Demo ground so we are hoping everything makes it through to next year
- Tuthill – The area has finally been getting a little bit of moisture but other than that not a lot happening right now
- Carlson- We sold all our trees in 2 weekends (about 400 trees). We are still seeing emerald ash borer throughout the area

- Miller- Avian influenza hit our area around 4-6 weeks ago, with several farms being heavily impacted. There luckily has been no new outbreaks
- McGhee – Even though it has been very dry in the area we are seeing some cover crops pop up
- Hofmann – I have been very busy with construction and the recent moisture has been very beneficial

Carlson adjourned the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

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Dennis Carlson, SSCWQC Vice Chair

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Kate Bussanmas, DSCWQ Assistant Division Director