

Minutes for February 8, 2024

SSCWQC Members Called In/Present

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

DSCWQ Staff

Jake Hansen, Vince Sitzmann, Susan Kozak, Will Myers, Nicky McEuen

Partners Present

Catherine Delong (ISU), Steve Hopkins (DNR), Robert Mier (NRCS)

Carlson called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2024-01 Miller moved to approve the agenda; Ellis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2024-02 Ellis moved to approve the December 7th, 2023, meeting minutes; McGhee seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bureau Chief Reports (Reports on file)

Field Services –Myers

Myers highlighted the following topics in his report;

- The annual cost share report for IDALS cost-share programs is now available upon request
- The Field Services Bureau's top priority right now is working to fill all vacant positions
- IDALS was approved funding for 22 summer interns

Mines and Minerals – Sitzmann

Sitzmann highlighted the following topics in his report;

- Abby Williams has been hired to fill the vacant Environmental Specialist position. Abby will be starting on Friday, February 9th
- The subsidence reported in Mahaska Co, reported in November 2023 has been mitigated and the work is now complete
- SF 2008 is a new minerals bill introduced this legislative session, proposing amendments to some of the existing rules. Staff provided comments on this proposed legislation, not supporting the proposal

Water Resources - Hansen

Hansen highlighted the following topics in his report;

- The Water Resources Bureau has hired two new staff members, first, Emalyn Polz, as an Environmental Specialist, as well as Jeremy Bril, as an Environmental Specialist Senior
- There are 12 remaining registered wells, all of which have plans for closure in place and most all are currently under construction
- The Bureau is currently estimating at least 18 projects to be open for bid in 2024

Director's Report – Kozak

Kozak highlighted the following topics in her report;

- The reporting process for RCPPs are underway, we anticipate a new round of RCPP proposals opening soon
- WQI has completed 118 grade stabilization projects with \$5.4 million in cost share on the ground
- It has been a very busy legislative season, a lot of conversations have been had around the budget

Partner Reports (Reports on file)

Conservation Districts of Iowa – Judge

No report given due to conflicting meetings

Engineers – Vacant

No Report

Iowa Department of Natural Resources –Hopkins

Hopkins highlighted the following topics in his report;

- The County Creek Sign Grant Program is now accepting applications through April 1st. The grant will provide between \$5-\$10k per county for signs within priority watersheds

- DNR will be holding annual project review meetings for 319-funded watershed projects from late February through early April

Iowa State Extension – DeLong

DeLong highlighted the following topics in her report

- The 2023 Iowa Farm and Rural Life Poll was released this winter asking around 2k individuals what they preferred to be called. 75% said they preferred to be called “farmer”, with the second choice being “farm operator” at only 10%
- Iowa State Extension will be holding the Annual Shade Tree Short Course in late February
- There will be several dates offered for the Private Well Stewardship Program. This program is a resource for private well owners to learn more about the responsibilities and risks of being a private well owner.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Mier

Mier provided an oral report only;

- Five new RCPP projects in Iowa were announced in 2023 (USDA Streamlines RCPP, New Iowa Projects Receive \$48 Million)
- NRCS is emphasizing the mitigation of climate change and climate smart ag through voluntary conservation programs
- USDA announced an investment of more than \$3.1 billion for 141 projects through the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities effort, which seeks to build and expand market opportunities for American commodities produced

Business (Discussion & possible action)

- Spring Regionals
 - Kozak presented the 2024 Spring Regional schedule to the committee members and encouraged everyone to attend the meeting in their area.

SWCD Vacancies / Appointments (Discussion & possible action)

- Cedar- Recommendation to appoint Randy Pedersen to fill the unexpired term of Dean Eilers

2024-3 Ellis moved to approve the new commissioner appointment listed above. Rosol seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

SSCWQC Member Reports

- Rosol- All the snow in the area has melted away over the last 5 days. Fruit trees are starting to bud. Currently working with local teachers to set up tours to provide education to students
- Tuthill – we received about 2 feet of snow with no frost. Water levels didn’t rise very much. We are entering Mines Safety and Health Education season
- Carlson- North Central Iowa also got about 2 feet of snow. Now is the time to check trees to look for any breakage, it is also time to start shopping for trees to plant this spring
- Miller- The ground is currently frozen. There has been grain being hauled in the area. The Tyson in NE IA tested positive for Avian Influenza
- McGhee – Not a lot is happening in the area. This winter provided a short ice fishing season
- Ellis – Recently received a lot of snow, however you can see the cover crops are greening up underneath

Carlson adjourned the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

Dennis Carlson, SSCWQC Vice Chair

Susan Kozak, DSCWQ Assistant Division Director