

WPAC Meeting Summary
September 26, 2014
Iowa Corn Growers Association
Johnston, IA

Updates were provided by:

Non-point Source Strategy Update:

Shawn Richmond, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)

IDALS and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) have completed the Water Resources Coordinating Council's (WRCC), Iowa Nutrient Reduction Annual Progress Report. The annual report goes through May 30, 2014 and can be found at:

<http://www.nutrientstrategy.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/1314progressreport.pdf>

Other update information included: IDALS received approval for the 2015 appropriation request for the Water Quality Initiative of \$4.4 million. Five new demonstration projects have been approved which will bring the total number of projects to thirteen. IDALS will be issuing a new request for demonstration project applications in the near future.

Point Source Update:

Eric Wiklund, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Currently 30 facilities have National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits with nutrient removal required. One facility has closed (Ankeny), Eldridge and Mt. Pleasant have added nutrient removal as they implement plant expansions, and one system will land apply. Nine systems are currently on public notice.

Iowa Nutrient Research Center:

John Lawrence, Iowa State University

Quarterly reports and projects can be found on the INRC website:

<http://www.nutrientstrategy.iastate.edu/>

There are projects looking at paired watersheds, stacked practices, tiling practices, remote sensing and monitoring. The question to be answered is how project information can be interpreted over time to measure change?

Currently, the Measures of Success Committee are looking at protocols to measure success in targeted watersheds. Identify a starting point, monitoring at the research scale versus watershed scale, using Farm Services Agency (FSA) survey for practices or yields, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for structures installed, and whether this information is available at the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 8 or HUC 12 level. What can be done about legacy phosphorus due to soil loss in the past? The feasibility of private sector inventory of the amount of nitrogen put on the ground – this is not something that can be seen from imagery. There is one project this fall and the team will see what questions the project raises.

Next steps relative to INRS – Strategy # 6 include:

- Look at new and expanded framework for logic model.
- Identify a lead responsible for conducting farmer surveys and compiling data.
- Work with private sector to design a sampling framework and survey to identify practice adoption and acres impacted by the practice.

- Conduct practice adoption survey by private sector (Ag retailers and CCAs) with appropriate training of data collectors and auditing of the process. Privacy rights of individual farms shall be maintained
- Provide the ISU Science Assessment Team the aggregate data to calculate estimated load reduction.
- Start with a pilot project to learn and adapt process.
- The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Center is:
 - Developing a database of conservation practices that receive cost-share
 - Evaluate the potential for using FSA acreage reports to determine land use changes over time.
- In addition to getting the initial framework up and running, work will continue to increase the scale and scope of the sampling.

Presentation – Iowa’s Water Quality Initiative (WQI)

Bruce Voigts and Michelle Elliott, SWCD, WQI Project Coordinators

Cover crop initiative, funded through the INRS, was aimed at first-time adopters to demonstrate the benefits of the practice to other producers within their geographic area.

Thirteen demonstration projects in the targeted watersheds have been approved for implementation of practices and technology. They include restoration of ox-bows, several bio-reactors, and edge of field monitoring. In some cases producers have received nitrate test strips to test water leaving the field. Nitrate testing is also occurring by nitrate sensing from leaves (corn) and fields that have received split applications of nitrogen.

The projects have had some diverse partners including Coca Cola, Hagie Equipment and John Deere.

Next steps include; sharing Iowa Soybean Association data from the Turkey River, which showed a 25% decrease of nitrate and phosphorus attributed to the use of cover crops. Provide the opportunity to show the benefits of other practices such as, no-till, wetlands, rain gardens, and mono-slope cattle buildings.

They have found that crop advisors seem to have the most credibility with producers and will seek to engage them more in the WQI. Other things they are looking at include use of a pollutant reduction calculator, a communications tool kit to help people train each other and share their stories with others, higher incentives at the beginning of a project then draw back as the project matures.

Presentation – Watershed Management Authorities (WMA)

Mary Beth Stevenson, Iowa-Cedar River Basin Coordinator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Mary Beth kicked off presentations by the Watershed Management Authorities (WMA) by providing an overview and timeline of the WMAs formation and implementation.

House File 2459 passed in 2010 provided for the formation of WMAs through 28E Agreements between cities, counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). Functions of the WMAs include watershed planning, management, education, grant writing and administration.

The primary benefits to forming a WMA are:

- They allow water resource problems to be addressed at the watershed scale
- Partnerships develop to leverage resources and create efficiencies
- The build support for conservation in urban and rural areas

This was followed by presentations from WMAs in Catfish Creek (Dean Mattoon) , Turkey River (Lora Friest), English River (Jody Bailey) and Indian Creek (Jennifer Fencil). There are currently 11 WMAs in Iowa (Appendix A). Members and funding of the WMAs are diverse. For example, membership of the WMAs presenting include:

- **Catfish Creek** – Dubuque County, Dubuque SWCD and the Cities of Dubuque, Asbury, Peosta, and Centralia.
- **Turkey River** – 23 cities including West Union, Strawberry Point, Postville, Fayette and Elkader; Fayette, Chickasaw, Clayton, Howard, Winneshiek counties; and Allamakee, Delaware, Fayette, Chickasaw, Clayton, Howard and Winneshiek SWCDs.
- **English River** – Cities of Barnes City, Grinnell, Kalona, Keswick, Wellman and Riverside; Keokuk and Washington Counties, and Iowa, Johnson, Keokuk Poweshiek and Washington SWCDs.
- **Indian Creek** – Cities of Marion, Cedar Rapids, Robbins and Hiawatha, Linn County and Linn SWCD.

Funding – Comprehensive planning dollars were awarded in December 2012, with expected completion of watershed master plans by the end of this year. Federal dollars for planning came from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and was administered locally by the Iowa Economic Development Authority for the purpose of assessing and mitigating future flood risks.

Other funding sources include: State Revolving Loan Fund sponsored projects, cities, counties, SWCD, grants, private foundations, IDNR Section 319 Funds, IDALS – Water Quality Initiative, Iowa Flood Center, USDA-NRCS - Conservation Innovation Grant, and many local organizations. The amount of funding is extremely variable from a few dollars to several thousand dollars. The opportunities to acquire funding beyond planning are very competitive.

Accomplishments include – Initial assessments including hydrological modeling, social survey, inventory and water quality, public education, adoption of a county ordinance and creation of a Unified Development Code for one city, research projects (rainfall, soil moisture and, in-field tile monitoring), survey of 1,500 watershed residents, completed SRF Clean Water Loan Program application, and the engagement of more than 50% of the urban and rural residents in key areas of the watershed in the first year.

What WPAC can do to support WMAs?

Gain support for maintainable baseline funding for administration of WMAs. Alleviate competition between WMAs for baseline funding and ensure cooperative, non-duplicative efforts at the local watershed scale.

Discussion of the Draft 2014 WPAC Annual Report resulted in the appointment of a sub-committee to review, edit and distribute a second draft to WPAC members for comments prior to the November

WPAC meeting. Sub-Committee members included: Linda Kinman, Ben Gleason, Gary Edwards, Rick Robinson, John Torbert, Shawn Richmond, and Jennifer Terry.

Next Meeting: November
 Potential Speakers: Nutrient Trading – Dustin Miller, Iowa League of Cities
 Adaptive Management – Speaker not identified
 Paul Lasley, Ph.D., Iowa Rural Life Poll
 Iowa State University, Department of Sociology

APPENDIX A

