

# MEETING MINUTES

## Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC) September 11, 2015

The WPAC held its quarterly meeting at 1:30 pm on Friday, September 11, 2015, at the Iowa State Capitol with co-chairs Ben Gleason (Iowa Corn Growers Association) and Jennifer Terry (Iowa Environmental Council) presiding.

Organizations/designees present at the meeting: John Torbert, Iowa Drainage District Association; Rick Robinson, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation; Julie Smith, Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities; Robin Fortney, Iowa Rivers Revival; Jeremy Rosonke and Steve Roe, Iowa Conservation Alliance; Roger Wolf, Iowa Soybean Association; Cody McKinley, Iowa Pork Producers Association; Dean Mattoon, Iowa League of Cities; Jay Brady, Iowa Water Environment Association; Emily Piper, Iowa Rural Water Association; and Jake Hansen, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship; for a total of 14 voting members.

Ex-officio members present: Chuck Isenhart, Iowa House of Representatives; Joe Bolkcom, Iowa Senate.

### New Business:

Terry let the council know that the co-chairs often receive information sharing requests and are sharing a statement from the State Soil Conservation Committee (see Appendix A).

### Old Business:

Terry asked for questions about the new guidelines and briefly summarized the work groups and procedure for making recommendations. The special vote has been postponed.

Isenhart invited the co-chairs to a tour to Minnesota with six legislators and Watershed Management Authority staff.

### Reports and Recommendations:

#### **Task Force Group #1 – “Create Economic Incentives”**

Wolf referred to the written report for more details. One of the group’s current recommendations is to encourage rural/urban collaboration within watersheds by using offsets. Many wastewater facilities’ feasibility studies will come back “not feasible”. Offsets allow cities to achieve nutrient reductions but at a lower cost. State and federal guidance and a state implementation committee are needed to create an offset program.

Another recommendation is to develop three legislative priorities that all WPAC members can support including funding for the Water Quality Initiative, increasing conservation practice incentives and funding, and developing programs that encourage rural/urban collaboration.

The group is developing another recommendation by assessing existing conservation programs. This assessment includes quantifying the backlog of cost share applications, assessing the status of watershed planning, and assessing the status of technical assistance.

Another developing recommendation involves inviting experts to speak at WPAC meetings to promote private sector resources including Shawn Richmond from Agribusiness Association of Iowa, Michelle Perez from World Resources Institute, and a panel of private sector conservation initiatives.

**Task Force #2 – “Improve Water Quality and Optimize Costs”**

Mattoon reported that the group has not met since the last WPAC meeting so has no update. They will monitor the ISU Extension and Conservation Districts of Iowa “retain” toolkits before making any recommendations.

**Task Force #3 – “Develop Reliable Protocols and Procedures for Pollution Control Quantification”**

Brady reported that the recommendation to be voted on is a study of statewide water quality monitoring (not watershed). They would like an outside firm to evaluate the various water quality monitoring programs for coordination, gaps and redundancies, quality control, and data management. A question of clarification was asked regarding watershed versus state level monitoring because the recommendation says “all” water monitoring.

The Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC) is conducting a compilation of water monitoring in regards to the nutrient reduction strategy annual report and will be giving an update at its next meeting. A measurement coordinator is being hired and will be the point of contact. Questions were asked about funding and if this recommendation is for WRCC or the legislature.

After discussion, a vote was taken. Eleven group designees voted “yes” in support of the recommendation: John Torbert, Iowa Drainage District Association; Julie Smith, Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities; Robin Fortney, Iowa Rivers Revival; Jeremy Rosonke and Steve Roe, Iowa Conservation Alliance; Roger Wolf, Iowa Soybean Association; Cody McKinley, Iowa Pork Producers Association; Dean Mattoon, Iowa League of Cities; Jay Brady, Iowa Water Environment Association; Emily Piper, Iowa Rural Water Association; and Jennifer Terry, Iowa Environmental Council. Three groups voted “no”: Rick Robinson, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation; Ben Gleason, Iowa Corn Growers Association; and Jake Hansen, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The vote surpassed the 75% threshold and the recommendation will be presented to WRCC at its next meeting.

New Business (continued):

Hansen gave a WRCC report and stated 19 of 22 agencies attended the meeting earlier that day. The council discusses a variety of issues beyond the nutrient reduction strategy e.g. DamWatch. The next WRCC meeting will be November 20 and will cover the following topics: golf course superintendents, Homeland Security’s resiliency grant application, harmful algal blooms, WOTUS implementation, and 2016 meeting dates.

Public Comment Period:

No public comments were given.

Next Meeting:

The next WPAC meeting will be December 4 from 1-4 pm at a location to be determined. Details will be sent to members. The annual report will be discussed.

Appendix A:

State Soil Conservation Committee Statement:

**Soil, Water and Mineral Subcommittee**

The State Soil Water and Conservation Committee strongly supports water quality monitoring as an effective method for evaluating the results of soil and water conservation practices implemented to address nutrient management strategies and Water Quality Initiatives. In an effort to reduce redundancy, minimize costs, and generate uniform results, the SSCC also supports a cooperative, coordinated effort among those entities currently funded to conduct water quality monitoring [including but not limited to Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC), Iowa State University (ISU), University of Iowa Hygienic Lab (UI), Iowa Soybean Association (ISA), Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC), United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR)] with a common protocol to determine best practices.

Submitted by Ben Gleason, Co-Chair  
September 22, 2015