

Agenda
Watershed Planning Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, July 13th, 1 – 3:15 PM
Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines
2nd Floor Conference Room

WPAC Member Attendees: Tyler Bettin, Iowa Pork Producers; Joe Bolkcom, Iowa Senate; Ben Gleason, Iowa Corn Growers Assoc.; Molly Hanson, Iowa Rivers Revival; Jessica Harder, Assoc. of Business and Industry; Jake Hansen, Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship; Mark Land, Iowa Floodplain & Stormwater Management Assoc.; Clare Lindahl, Chair, Conservation Districts of Iowa; Ann Robinson, vice-chair, Iowa Environmental Council; Rick Robinson, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation; Steve Roe and Glenn Vondra, Iowa Conservation Alliance; Shawn Richmond, Agribusiness Association of Iowa; Adam Schneiders, Iowa DNR; Greg Sindt, Iowa Water Environment Association; Todd Sutphin, Iowa Soybean Association; John Torbert, Iowa Drainage District Association; John Wills, Iowa House

Other Attendees: Vanessa Fixmer-Oraiz, HBK Engineering; Bill Freeland, House Democratic Caucus; Susan Heathcote and Sydney Samples, Iowa Environmental Council; Linda Kinman, Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities; Deb Kozel, Legislative Service Agency; Pam Mollenhauer and Don Simmons, State Hygienic Lab; University of Iowa; Laurie Wissler, Iowa State University

Welcome and introductions
Review and approve agenda

Presentation

Review of Water Quality Monitoring in Iowa Report, Adam Schneider, IDNR (report prepared in collaboration with IDALS, ISU, IIHR). Schneiders presented slides on the Nutrient WQ Monitoring Framework outlining what the report will cover, along with some background information on the purpose and process. (A pdf of the slides will be included with the meeting record). The purpose of the report is to describe and report on current known stream nutrient monitoring efforts in Iowa in the context of the framework, and to discuss the challenges in collecting and using water quality data. The report is in final draft stage and plans to have the report completed and available in early August at the same time as the annual Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy Report is completed.

Schneiders emphasized that monitoring programs are designed to provide data to answer a specific question, such as: How much is Nitrate reduced by a bioreactor? How much Phosphorus is removed by a city wastewater treatment plant? How much P is reduced when a given amount of cover crops are planted and maintained? How much N is discharged from Iowa/Cedar River basin annually over 20 years?

WQ monitoring challenges include data gaps, lack of long-term data and event-based monitoring, limited data on P loads for small watersheds (considering using turbidity as a surrogate for P), info on extended practice implementation to see if can even tie to water quality, legacy nutrients, lag time, limitations of conservation practices, variable precipitation and stream flow.

Recommended next steps – Compile all we know for nutrient monitoring, especially determining Total Phosphorus loads, re-evaluate point source load estimates, collect more information on effectiveness of nutrient reduction practices. Report will also recommend creating a technical work group to develop recommendations for a monitoring design to measure INRS progress.

Confirm WPAC procedures

Clare quickly reviewed House of Representatives Standing Committee Rules suggested to consider following at last meeting. However, do not seem very applicable to a council like WPAC. After consideration, propose more relevant to use agreed-upon WPAC procedures along with Robert's Rules of Order (summary version of Robert's Rules provided again to members)

Ann reviewed state requirements of boards and councils information from Legislative Service Agency. The Council is a governmental body, required to:

- Post information on meetings at last a week in advance,
- Keep minutes of each meeting that include at a minimum the time, date, place, members present and any action taken including voting results.
- Maintain an official repository of meeting notes available for public access, which IDALS has agreed to do for WPAC.
- “Serial gatherings” of subgroups involving less than a majority of members of the official body do not have to meet the same requirements, but are encouraged to share notice of meetings with the full group and keep summary notes of meetings.

Work group reports

Taskforce 1 – Create Economic Incentives. Report from Rick R. Group met. Talked with IDNR & IDALS together to review programs, ask if there are there opportunities to work together more. There is a possibility for joint application procedures for grants/cost-share. Three main pieces: urban-rural collaboration, working with private sector and public sector: looking at programs and how state can do better. Plan to meet again in August and wrap up work and report by October meeting.

Taskforce 2 – Improve Water Quality/Optimize Costs. Ben G. reported that group did not meet. Taskforce needs a new chair/convenor. No report.

Taskforce 3 – Develop Reliable Protocols & Procedures. Greg S. reported for group. Presented Recommendation on Monitoring (revised from 2015) that included 4 items and background information to address questions and concerns from last year. Taskforce thinks important to expand water monitoring for at least a subset of publicly funded projects to gain better data for variety of reasons, including to have more accurate information on benefits of practices and generally to gain more info from projects to guide future work and investments. Recommend WRCC take lead to develop protocol guidelines.

Discussion/Questions on recommendations:

Ben G. asked Jake H. about requirements for reporting? Require reporting already in forms used by watershed projects? Jake responded that WQIs report quarterly or semi-annually (not sure). Results reported to legislature, but not detailed by project.

Shawn R.: WQIs already report *ad nauseum*, so don't know that it should be mandated. But if want to do, good to have resources to help. Question whether of value to have subset required. Opens up can of worms. All agree wants to expand our knowledge base, but INRS sums up state of science already.

Todd S.: Adam gave a great presentation, so suggest premature to move on this recommendation. Question whether WRCC is right group to provide guidance. ISA supports monitoring, but want to make sure get recommendation right.

John W.: If we have good, reliable modeling, what do we hope to gain? Generally know pollutant reductions. Will take tax dollars, also time of watershed coordinators.

Greg S.: Appropriate modeling a key, always need to be improving models. Recommendations also allow other assessment techniques where appropriate. That's where would be good to look to experts represented by WRCC.

Molly H.: Watershed projects are an opportunity to collect real data and help inform models, important to analyze and assess effectiveness of different watershed projects.

Joe B.: Adam mentioned real-time monitoring available. Going forward will allow us to consider monitoring along with rainfall. 55 sites today have real-time monitoring going on and public has access to see online. People want some accountability, including land managers and landowners, to help determine if their investments are making a difference and modeling is accurate. Think recommendations are important for robust discussion. Not all data shared with public. That issue is something missing in conversation – we need to have a platform available to deposit data and have access to. Also, at the same time that we have gained monitoring sensors for nitrates, IDNR has been unplugging USGS stream gauges because don't have resources to keep them going. So what is the net status? Also, presents an opportunity to migrate ambient system to best platform.

Ben G.: Why didn't fix already existing state system rather than create a new system?

Joe Bokom: No new \$ for state initiatives. Iowa Geological Survey has migrated from IDNR to IIHR because state couldn't afford to keep it going.

Steve R.: Maybe taskforce was premature to present the recommendations, not knowing where Adam was with this project. Suggest we take recommendations off the table for now and take back to taskforce for fine-tuning based on comments and IDNR's final report.

Ann R.: As a member of the taskforce, want to point out that the revised recommendations represent considerable effort to address WPAC's stated concerns from last year, while also supporting progress for data collection.

Greg S.: Agree to take off the table for now. Suggest we invite comments on the new revision to better gauge support for concept and then follow up to refine.

Clare L.: OK. Will table for now. Ask WPAC members to share thoughts about what recommendations should be part of that taskforce. What would you like to see in more protocols and guidelines? Please share with the group.

Engaging WRCC & Legislature in WPAC activities & recommendations

Clare L. reviewed results of survey about WPAC members' interest in taskforces and topics, to better consider full set of WPAC responsibilities outlined by legislation. For the most part, people enjoyed working in existing workgroups. A few people are not in a workgroup. Formed a new Workgroup 4: Provide Greater Flexibility for Community Involvement and Watershed Planning.

Majority of group expressed interest in a facilitated session. Looking for a facilitator. Have asked for help from ISU. Taskforces should come to Fall meeting prepared with a recommendation to present and discuss, and will expect to develop a recommendation for others at meeting. Bring in a facilitator to help us work on and possibly prioritize. Expect next meeting to longer.

Then plan to take that information forward to engage legislators, WRCC and others in a new way. Create template storyboard on recommendations for legislative reception or breakfast, invite WRCC. Use opportunity to educate legislators on needs of the state.

Joe B., Great idea. Possibly do a joint event/presentation with WRCC. Need more legislators paying attention.

Announcements by WPAC members

- Jake H.: Next WRCC Meeting: Tuesday, July 19th, 2016 from 1:30 - 4:00 PM at the Polk County Extension Office. Agenda coming. Need updated emails from Pork Producers and IRR.
- Todd S: Urban Rural field day, July 14, Storm Lake sponsored by League of Cities.
- John W.: First annual Prairie Lakes Conference, Okoboji, August 11-12, associated with Okoboji Blue Water Festival.

Clare L.: Will doodle poll for next WPAC Meeting in October

No public comments

Ben Gleason motioned to adjourn. IFBF seconded.
Adjourned 2:40 p.m.

Notes respectfully submitted by Ann Robinson, Iowa Environmental Council