

## Water Resources Coordinating Council

Wednesday April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013 @ Metro Waste Authority

### Meeting Minutes

#### WRCC Members/Designees Present:

Secretary Northey, Jim Gillespie, Todd Coffelt, John Benson, David Osterberg, Maureen Clayton, Scott Marler, Lori Beary, Larry Weber, Kevin Richards, Marty Adkins, John Whitaker, Karen Flournoy, Diane Karnish

Meeting convened @ 9:05 AM CST

- Welcome and Introductions made by Secretary Northey
  - Public comments will be received at end of meeting
  - Call for additional agenda items made. None identified.
- Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy Update
- Nonpoint Source Updates (Dean Lemke)
  - Review of all comments is underway by IDALS/DNR/ISU
  - Over 1700 comments were received and are available on website
  - Planning for implementation activities is underway
  - IDALS budget ask was \$2.4M and \$4.4M in FY14 and FY15 respectively to start implementation efforts
  - Will plan to look at small watershed projects within the priority HUC8 watersheds
  - No formal RFP for projects yet, but planning is underway
  - Funding ask includes a coordinator position to assist with these efforts
  - Potential exists already for WRCC to be coordinating existing efforts in priority watersheds
  - Northey indicated WRCC could consider forming a workgroup to discuss this
  - Question raised by Osterberg regarding how open group participation would be. Claimed that Iowa Environmental Council was not allowed to participate on watershed prioritization workgroup.
  - Northey responded that the watershed prioritization group was covered very openly in the WRCC and that nobody was excluded from participation.
  - Osterberg commented that more openness was still needed.
  - Lemke explained that it was a very open process that IEC was included in through the WPAC representative to the group that represented all of the WPAC NGOs. That representative was Roger Wolf from WPAC. WPAC representative role was to solicit input of the WPAC group and participate on behalf of all the NGOs of WPAC and provide reports back to that group on a regular basis. Lemke acknowledged that some dysfunction within WPAC apparently existed with this approach, but that it was an open process nonetheless.

- Osterberg comment that a sole representative was not an effective approach. Need to know the when and where details about meetings.
- Coffelt commented that the technical experts within WRCC were tapped to serve on the group along with WPAC NGOs represented. Communication lines were very open to WPAC, so the meeting details were adequately conveyed.
- Weber commented that coordination could be improved and suggested posting of more information via the WRCC website.
- Point Source Updates (Steve Williams)
  - Review of comments is underway
  - Working on some responses to point source comments
  - Have developed a list of major point sources in priority HUC8 watersheds and will attempt to prioritize these for early work
  - Several presentations being made
  - City of Clinton completed wastewater treatment plant last fall that included Biologic Nutrient Removal (BNR) technology for N&P reduction and has been performing well
  - Several NPDES permits close to formal drafts for issuance. May see some permits issued early to mid-May
  - Can move forward now within existing permitting structure to issue permits
  - Josh Mandelbaum inquired what the process for responding to comments would be.
  - Northey responded that individual responses to all 1700+ comments were not realistic. A general summary would be more appropriate.
  - Mandelbaum asked if a response letter would accompany final report.
  - Northey replied that changes would be made to final report and that it would be released. Noted that final process decisions have not been made yet and reinforced that the final report will be a strategic resource and is not a rulemaking.
- Science Team Updates
  - No update since ISU member of WRCC was not present
- WRCC Discussion on NRS Update
  - Osterberg inquired to WRCC group whether they wanted to position on support of legislation related to the nutrient strategy. Commented that WRCC doesn't officially do anything decision wise.
  - Northey replied WRCC members could individually support or not, but that it is not the purpose of WRCC group to do collectively.
  - Osterberg called for a show of hands poll on whether or not the WRCC members wanted to take a collective position in support of legislation and raised his hand.
  - No response was received by other members of WRCC.
  - Adkins pointed out that lobbying for legislation was prohibited by federal rules.
  - Flournoy indicated the same.
  - Northey noted no engagement interest was apparent.
  - Mike Delaney asked if public volunteer efforts to reduce point source nutrient loads could be considered.

- Steve Williams replied that communities can adopt local ordinances on their own for those types of actions. Pointed out that there are many outreach/educational resources available to help.
- Northey pointed out that this was really more geared towards urban nonpoint sources and that IDALS has urban conservation resources available as well.
- Major point sources are the primary target on the point source side but all point sources will need to engage.
- Center for Nutrient Management Proposal Overview (Larry Weber)
  - Part of EPA STAR program
  - 2 awards for \$2.5M, 4 year duration, require 10% match
  - Focus on centers for water research
  - Proposal to advance a systems view of nutrient management
  - Involve science, demo projects, community involvement
  - Project team consists of members from ISU, UI, and University of Illinois
  - Objectives include
    - Develop & assess practices
    - Expand monitoring
    - Develop hydrologic understanding
    - Evaluate social, economic, environment cost/benefit analysis
    - Real time report card framework with annual component
  - Marty Adkins asked if soil biology components would be involved
  - Weber replied that soil science will be heavily involved and also noted that some fate and transport areas are in critical need of better understanding
  - \$2.5M is a small start to a much larger need over time
  - Kevin Richards commented that there are discussions occurring in the legislature about long term funding
  - Weber noted that the legislature had recently requested a description of the framework and funding need
  - Expect response to grant proposal by mid to late summer
- Iowa Soybean Association Projects Overview (Todd Suthpin)
  - Copy of PowerPoint available at <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/WRCC/pdf/WRCCISAEnviroProg.pdf>
  - ISA environmental programs & services overview
  - Advance ag leadership for environmental quality
  - Develop, apply, and promote programs
  - ISA governed by elected board of 21 farmers
  - Serves 45,000 Iowa soybean farmers
  - Look to maintain productivity while making environmental progress
  - Environmental programs strategies
    - Leverage investments
    - Monitoring and assessment
    - Data analysis and management

- Targeting for cost effectiveness
    - Education/outreach
  - Plan – Do – Check – Act
  - Quantifying practices
    - Tillage passes
    - GDFE/acre & yield
    - Corn stalk nitrate analysis
    - Energy inputs
  - Watershed planning
    - Locally-led, farmer involvement
    - Identify resource concerns
    - Establish goals/objectives
    - Watershed inventory
    - Formulate/evaluate alternatives
    - Write plan
    - Implement
    - Integrated in-field/edge-of-field solutions
    - No silver bullet
  - Water monitoring analytical services
    - Working on WQ lab certification this year
    - Autosamplers and paired micro watershed studies
  - Leadership services
    - Provide staff leadership and farmer champions
  - Science publications in environmental journals on bioreactors, water quality, and watersheds
  - Exploring new technology development of re-saturated riparian buffers, oxbow cleanouts
- Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards Reminder
  - Reminder provided for groups to nominate farmers by June 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Seeking to broaden recognition efforts and create positive conversations
  - Awards event planned for August 15<sup>th</sup> at the Iowa State Fair
- Other Topics
  - DNR handout provided on watershed successes
- Upcoming Events
  - Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force Spring 2013 Meeting (KY) – April 17-19
  - Soil & Water Conservation Week (April 28 - May5)
  - NRCS series of soil health training events in June
- Future Meeting Dates
  - June 4<sup>th</sup> @ 9am – TBD
  - July 26<sup>th</sup> @ 9am - TBD
- Public Comments

- No public comments received

Meeting adjourned at 10:57am