

**Water Resources Coordinating Council**

**December 14, 2012**

**MWA Office, 300 East Locust, Suite 100**

**Meeting Minutes**

9:05 AM          Coffelt called meeting to order.

Introductions of WRCC members present included: Secretary Northey – IDALS, Jim Gillespie – DSC- IDALS, Julie Vande Hoef - Governor Branstad’s office, Bill Ehm – IDNR, Karla Peiffer –USDA-RD, Elizabeth Baird-IDOT, Lori Beary- IFA, Rich Sims – NRCS, Kevin Richards-USGS, Larry Weber-IA Flood Center, Maureen Clayton-UNI, John Whitaker – FSA.

Northey highlighted the WRCC effort up to this point regarding ongoing activities. – Website address of affiliate organizations needed for website and were requested. A sheet to provide in written form was distributed.

Northey reviewed the agenda that was provided.

**MOU, Web page, WPAC update, WRCC**

MOU – Coffelt proposed small working group to work on the MOU and bring back to the whole group by the next meeting.

Ehm – Identified the MOU may not be necessary. Laws on the books already identify the requirements of agencies to participate, cooperate, and coordinate the efforts.

IDOT – limited discussion and comment.

Gillespie –reviewed history of MOU – bring clarity and definition to responsibility of WRCC members – goals and purposes. Governor (at that time) identified that signatures of agencies would reinforce working together.

Northey – If we go forward – simplify, identify the issues, reinforce agencies.

Working group – Julie Vande Hoef, Todd Coffelt, Bill Ehm. Coffelt will contact people, provide revision by next meeting.

**COLLECTING INFORMATION-**

Northey – How do we do that? Links to respective agencies. Coffelt will contact members electronically to solicit email addresses to post on WRCC web page. A paper was distributed for members to identify web page addresses.

Focus will be to utilize WRCC website as information hub, focus on topics specific to WRCC goals, provide “other resources” section, link to WPAC and member agencies.

Other locations or groups that should be included or identified in the WRCC page?

Moving WPAC web page to WRCC web page under IDALS home page. Coffelt will work with IDNR to gain access to information and move to IDALS.

### **UPDATE FROM WPAC.**

Roger Wolf provided background and update of WPAC. Wolf highlighted efforts including report to Legislature and identified purpose of WPAC in relationship with WRCC. The report will focus on intent and areas that efforts have highlighted on. It will be specific in relation to charges by the legislature. Report is not final at this time. Wolf identified value to joint meetings to reinforce efforts between agencies and WPAC groups. Report due by end of the year, could be presented to WRCC at January meeting.

Rick Robinson mentioned WPAC efforts to organize, prioritize and move forward working on challenges to water quality and will continue to try and work together.

Weber – Could you comment on purpose of report regarding recommendations to WRCC or to Legislature? Wolf responded to status of charges that Legislature had for WPAC. Planning, monitoring, targeting, leveraging dollars, efficiency with monies, and simplicity will be focus of the report.

Northey – Can the report be distributed prior to January? Wolf will provide to Coffelt and Coffelt will distribute.

### **CONCEPTS OF STRATEGY**

Northey – We don't have the big report, but we have pieces that have been part of presentations that have been presented recently. Focus of strategy will be on motivating voluntary adoption approach to achieve nutrient reductions. Given limited funding available, prioritization will be needed both for practices and watersheds. A power point presentation and a handout of slides were presented by Dr. John Lawrence, ISU.

The nitrogen strategy has gone out for “blind” peer review. Comments have been received. The phosphorus strategy will be sent out for peer review at the beginning of the year.

Northey – How do we implement this?

Conversation with US EPA, NRCS, IDALS about this yesterday (December 13, 2011).  
Conversation focused on potential of the strategy being able to fund efforts to address water quality concerns. EPA and USDA officials made a special trip for discussion. Reiterated “they want to see this happen”. Northey reinforced the need to disseminate this information to producers: there is something they can do, starting with looking at the practice list.

Rich Sims, NRCS – Certainty or Safe Harbor – Producer implements conservation plan which would provide safe harbor if regulatory concerns develop. Is currently a pilot project at watershed scale.

IDALS made budget request for additional dollars to address water quality. Focus would be on filling in some positions that have been lost and for dollars that would focus on water quality efforts. These monies could help get federal dollars.

One of the requirements is targeting. How do we do this? What are the things that need to be involved? Utilize existing ranking or prioritization systems.

Watershed Prioritization Working Group – meet before next meeting.

Members – IDALS, NRCS, IDNR, ISU, Flood Center – Larry Weber, USGS – Kevin Richards, Roger Wolf – ISA,

What resources or methods are out there? Need to mesh to develop understanding.

Maureen Clayton – How will this work? What will be the target?

Rich Sims – Tool for Prioritization – Working on HUC 12 watershed prioritization tool that utilizes 27 NRCS datasets. Can be used for assessments. Has a multiplier that can be used to assist ranking.

Bill Ehm, IDNR – Geographic consideration is important, but what else. Should also include issues as well and include local stakeholder buy-in.

Maureen Clayton – efforts should try to identify multiple benefits of practices.

### **POINT SOURCE UPDATE –**

Bill Ehm, IDNR. Efforts have been completed to evaluate previous efforts by other states. IDNR invited KS staff to Iowa to discuss their process. IDNR is focusing on point sources to reduce their phosphorus and nitrogen loads. Focus is on working with stakeholders from the 3 largest wastewater discharging systems in the state (> 1,000,000 gals per day) to increase the N and P reduction in an effort to achieve 8% N load and 22% P load reductions. Strategy would be implemented over the course of 7 – 10 years. There is a technical committee working on standards regarding dependent applicability. Stream

standards are based on biotic indexes for impairment. Hope to have standard recommendations by 2012. This is in an effort to get point sources to adopt Best Available Control Technologies (BACT). Voluntary adoption by industries would help achieve regulatory avoidance.

Northey – “Can we put together a joint Point Source / Non-Point Source strategy by February 1?”

Ehm – That has been the conversation with EPA and is the goal for the effort. This would reinforce “The Iowa Strategy”, unified, one document, etc. There needs to be a balance between stakeholders to stay informed and identify efforts of each side.

Larry Weber, Iowa Flood Center – “Is there a price tag on the cost of adoption/implementation of the strategies?”

John Lawrence, ISU – Should be able to come up with something in the next couple of weeks.

Ehm – Adam Schnieders of the IDNR is leading the charge on the point source effort.

## **OTHER**

Kevin Richards – Group working on urban stormwater priorities out of UNI. Suggested presentation to WRCC. Accepted for February meeting. Rebecca Kauten, Wayne Peterson, Mary Skopec. Coffelt will contact.

Larry Weber – What are the priorities and annual layout of the WRCC for keeping the Legislature updated on the efforts going on? Northey – Would be a good thing, though it is not required. Through the efforts of the strategy it would be good to tie in to reporting to the Legislature next year. Will be a good effort for further discussion.

Rich Sims – Webinar “Farming after the flood” hosted by ISU Extension, Nebraska Extension, and others for farmers to consider options for planting before next spring. Sims can provide information to interested parties. John Whitaker – FSA – is recorded and available in that manner. Sims – comes from the Ag Working Group.

Introductions of John Whitaker, Linda Kinman, Chuck Isenhart, and Daryl Weems.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Summary by Northey – 2 working groups, next meeting, points of contact.

