

Water Resources Coordinating Council
Tuesday January 13, 2015
1:30-4:00PM
Wallace Building - Conference Room 2
502 E 9th St, Des Moines

WRCC Website: <http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/WRCC.asp>

Meeting Notes

1:30 - Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM. A total of 32 representatives of member agencies and members of the public who signed in were in attendance.

1:35 - WRCC Member Agency Updates (All)

The following member agency reports were discussed:

DNR (Trautman): Adam Schnieders presented an update on the status of the point source component of the NRS. DNR Staff also discussed a report compiling more than \$270 million in public investment in water quality on an annual basis through the various programs administered by the agency and leveraged by other public and private partners.

University of Iowa, College of Public Health (Osterberg): No report.

ISU Extension (Lawrence): An update on the Nutrient Research Center was given, specifically discussing the FY2016 budget request. ISUEO is also working to incorporate survey work through existing efforts and new outreach to gather information on knowledge and understanding of the NRS, as well as adoption rates and farmer behaviors with respect to conservation adoption and implementation.

Iowa HSEMD (Benson): The Long-Term Recovery Task Force is nearing completion of its work and will issue a final report in February. This could be a presentation topic for the March meeting.

IDPH (Schmitz): The Department is working with IPPA to conduct monitoring and research on harmful algal blooms, looking at its investments and the potential costs/impacts of removing those blooms from waterbodies.

USACE (Karnish): Regional Permit 33 is moving forward. It is anticipated that a final version will be released in the next several weeks. Additionally, the Corps is looking at submitting the Des Moines River basin for inclusion in the Sustainable Rivers program.

FSA (Whitaker): FSA is processing some paid losses to producers under the Emergency Livestock Assistance program.

NRCS (Adkins): NRCS anticipates making funding announcements on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) later this week.

National Weather Service (Zogg): The NWS will release two spring flood outlooks; one on February 19 and another on the week of March 5.

USGS (Richards): Richards reported on the results of the 2013 study on water monitoring throughout Iowa.

IDALS (Hansen): IDALS is hosting a Soil and Water Quality Funding Summit in partnership with Iowa DNR and NRCS on February 6th. IDALS also presented updates on funding cycles for WQI Demonstration projects, Watershed Planning and Development Grants, and WQI Urban Conservation Demonstration projects. Copies of the WQI Legislative Report were also distributed and have been posted to the website.

2:15 - Nonpoint Source Management Plan Update (Bonini)

Allen Bonini, Iowa DNR, gave a presentation on the progress of the Nonpoint Source Management Plan and the goals contained within. The presentation is posted to the WRCC website.

2:45 - Nutrient Loading Study (Schilling)

Keith Schilling with Iowa USGS gave a presentation on the results of a recently concluded Nutrient Loading Study. Discussion was held on the distinction between nutrient load vs. concentration. The presentation will be posted to the WRCC website.

3:15 – Floodplain Mapping Project Update

Duane Sand with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation introduced Nathan Young with the Iowa Flood Center. Young gave a presentation on progress by the IFC in updating flood maps throughout the state. Particular attention was given to the status and functionality of the online mapping system under development.

3:35 - WPAC Update

Jennifer Terry, WPAC co-chair, presented a written WPAC report. Terry reported that the WPAC would be meeting in the coming months to conduct a strategic planning session and to identify recommended priorities. The strategic planning session is scheduled for January 27th.

Some copies of the WPAC 2015 report to the Iowa Legislature were distributed. The report will be posted to the website.

3:40 - Other Topics

Duane Sand reported on a meeting held with Field to Market on December 5. The meeting highlighted efforts by the corporate community to consider environmental quality in the process of sourcing their supply chains. This may be a presentation topic for a future meeting.

3:50 - Public Comments (Please contain comment length to 3 minutes per person)

Jennifer Terry, Iowa Environmental Council, gave the following remarks to the WRCC:

For the past year, the Iowa Environmental Council has called upon the Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC) to set a timeline and local goals to reach the 45% statewide reduction goal set forth in Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS). Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey has repeatedly failed to take a vote, or even attempt to gain consensus among WRCC members, to do so. Unfortunately refusing to acknowledge or address the issue does not cause it to cease to exist.

If the WRCC and the state's leaders had listened to Iowans that raised questions about the all-voluntary Nutrient Reduction Strategy and taken meaningful action to address concerns about the lack of local goals, timelines, consistent water quality monitoring, transparency and sustainable funding, perhaps Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) wouldn't have found it necessary to file intent of a lawsuit against three counties in northern Iowa.

We can blame nature, high rainfall or any other variety of factors, but this response won't solve the problem. Iowans want to see actions, not excuses. Excuses don't solve problems. The NRS is a voluntary strategy, and no watersheds in Sac, Calhoun or Buena Vista counties volunteered, so no WQI watershed projects have been proposed. How does the NRS plan to address water quality issues in these areas and others like them? These are questions the public wants and deserves to have answered.

The Iowa Environmental Council will continue to give voice to Iowan's concerns about the state's plan to reduce pollution in our lakes and rivers threatening safe drinking water and outdoor recreation, and call upon the WRCC to take the steps necessary to ensure we are making meaningful, scientifically-verifiable progress on achieving clean water in Iowa.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19 at 9:00 AM at a location to be determined.