Water Resources Coordinating Council

State Capitol, Room 103

October 4, 2011, 1:05 PM

The meeting was called to order by Secretary Northey. Introductions of WRCC members and guests followed.

Secretary Northey welcomed attendees and provided a general synopsis of recent actions affecting the WRCC.

- Legislation basis – Fenton distributed 466B. Northey highlighted the move, reflected on previous WRCC.
- Jim Gillespie, DSC, briefly reviewed Watershed Quality planning Taskforce, the original legislation that initiated WRCC focusing on:
  - Brief summary of meetings that were held. Topics focused on quality, shifted to other topics.
  - Identified a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), of which copies were distributed to members.
  - Brief overview of a study of the Iowa-Cedar River Basin
  - A concern regarding State Historical and Preservation Office and expediency of returning Phase 1 reviews was overviewed.
  - Some items may still be active by virtue of not being completed within the last administration.
  - Acknowledgment that previous WRCC efforts waned as with many efforts from the WQPTF
- Dialogue among members regarding overlapping/cross tasking may have existed.
  - Important to focus on high priority areas that affect water quality.
  - Don’t give mixed signals between agencies will be key.
- Discussion regarding reporting and groups providing reports versus focusing on efforts and objectives of the WRCC
- Effort to reinforce purpose and efforts of WRCC to focus on coordinating.
  - How will this function?
    - Determining priorities – how?
      - Controlling ancillary efforts – how?
- Input from group:
  - Chuck Gipp, IDNR
    - Water quality issues such as nutrients
      - How are agencies going to cooperate?
        - Voluntary systems
      - Meet needs of nutrients
      - Regulatory avoidance
- Limitations in personnel and resources
  - Rich Sims, NRCS
    - Flood of 2008
      - WRCC has opportunity to benefit from that working with supervisors at the county level – flood plains, planning, working as a group to utilize land as best as we can. Investment now, returns later.
      - Using committee for watershed planning
  - Northey –
    - Combining quality and quantity efforts –
      - Balancing needs, priorities, national, local,
    - People are asking, legislation is saying.
    - CONTEXT of Water Quality Discussion
    - IDALS and IDNR sat down with EPA Region 7
      - Interested in water quality strategy for N and P reduction
      - Working together, not stepping on toes, not leaving holes undone.
      - Point source versus Non-Point Source – roles and responsibilities
        - Alluded to 2 efforts, voluntary, in the coming months.
        - Some are mandatory, looking at going beyond that.
      - Should have something in the next few months
        - IDNR on point source
        - IDALS on Non-Point source
  - GIPP
    - Reemphasized that parallel efforts do not exist.
    - Get agencies on board to add to the draft document
  - Northey
    - IDALS working with ISU to look at science on the farm to look at the impacts
    - What do studies say are the actual reductions?
      - What are differences between various areas of the state?
      - Effects of N application timing?
      - Cover crops?
      - Bio-reactors?
    - Have met. Reviewed what the first draft looked like.
      - What is working? Not? Why?
      - Producer’s efforts. Why they changed? Didn’t?
  - Lawrence -
    - Science assessment is part of the overall strategy.
      - In the coming weeks - making it transparent.
  - Northey –
    - Looking at ways it can cross in to programs – State and Federal
  - Ehm –
    - Point Source
Had meeting yesterday – Point source industry and staff
  - Reviewed model from the State of Kansas
  - Meeting next week with environmental groups –
    - Will be discussing how PS and NPS will be married
  - Meeting with IDALS about how they will be married in the coming weeks.
  - Referred to how it will be presented to the public.

  - Northey
    - Where to find dollars – limited.
    - Working together to find ways to generate the dollars.
    - Be proactive before regulation comes.

  - Sims
    - Efforts in USDA – NRCS
      - MRBI – 9 watersheds –
        - $ focused on watershed quality practices
        - Cover crops, bioreactors, WRP, WREP, grassed waterways
        - 6330 active contracts in state, most in nation
          - 220 million for conservation practices in EQIP
        - 1330 easements
        - 220 million? - not sure on this.
        - Keep it on a voluntary basis

  - Northey
    - Farm Bill in next year or two
      - Programs focused on water quality or soil quality.
        - Potential to meld together. Not sure what it will look like.
      - Help producers with livestock and or crop operations

  - Whitaker
    - CREP- 10 year anniversary
      - Will do what we can to keep CREP going in Iowa
      - Farm bill is up to congress, not administration
    - Cooperative agreements are good

  - Northey –
    - Explained functionality of CREP

  - What are other issues –
    - Ken Sharp, IDPH – from public health – issues with water quality based on ties to public health concerns.
      - Is there any linkage to Healthy State Initiative from Governor’s office?
        - Water, Air, ag practice? What are connections?
          - May be more appropriate down the road.

  - Karla Pifer, USDA, RD
    - Financing water and wastewater systems
• Smallest of the small rural communities
  ○ Escalating cost of infrastructure
  ○ Partners with SRF and CDBG
    ▪ What can this group do to help partner more?
  ○ Up to 10,000 population
    ▪ Typically 1,000 and less (20 households)
  ○ Federal dollars are a restriction
    ▪ Their funds allocated at $20 million per year
      • 30% grants
      • 70% loans –
    ▪ Are not available to give communities the funds they need
  ○ Guidelines?
    ▪ None for Maximum. Communities determine whether or not it is feasible.
  ○ Priority lists? Criteria?
    ▪ Leverage? Location?
    ▪ Have a current priority system with a score.
      • For most part they do not have a waiting list.
        Typically come to them because they HAVE to fix a problem.
  ○ Changes in Fed financing?
    ▪ Should be funded, but most likely reduced.
  ○ What are the challenges?
    ▪ Rule changes?
      • EHM – Communities are challenged to come up with funds.
  ○ Pifer – Utility group has been very active.
    ▪ Have felt beaten up on by communities. Waiting to be requested versus seeking opportunities.

• NORTHEY -
  ○ We need to be able to connect them.

• Gillespie
  ○ Un-sewered communities can be part of the WIRB applicants, there is a requirement to identify connection between un-sewered communities and watersheds.

• NORTHEY –
  ○ Other pieces
    ▪ Funding, PS, NPS, work groups in general.
  ○ Previous WRCC –
    ▪ Iowa-Cedar River Basin Study
• Implementation
  • 319 Water Quality projects
    • 50-60 active
    • GILLESPIE
      o WSPF and 319 – joint application
      o Reviewed application process and award
      o Gillespie approached overlap.
        ▪ SRF (State Revolving Fund)
        ▪ WIRB
    • How do we make ourselves aware of this?
• NORTHEY –
  o WPAC (Watershed Priority Advisory Committee)
    • Robinson
      ▪ Reviewed background and objectives of the WPAC.
      ▪ Purpose, report, priorities. – Submitted – is available.
      ▪ Reviewed work of WRCC and legislative history
      ▪ Meeting Wednesday, October 12. Will be a report in December of this year.
      ▪ Communication with WPAC and vice versa with WRCC.
        o What goes on between the meetings – how to achieve this
      ▪ NGOs looking in from the outside, need
        o Regular communication
        o Regular collaboration in-between meetings.
• Northey –
  • Part of this is to work together and better and communicate together and better.
• What are the things that need to be done?
  o Prioritization
    ▪ How do we prioritize?
    ▪ Take everybody that comes.
    ▪ We depend on aggressive groups to make a big difference.
    ▪ Focus on specific watersheds
    ▪ How do we prioritize?
      o How do we do this?
        ▪ For future discussion, would make sense to discuss how WRCC would make decisions. Take home for thought and homework. Focus on this a figure it out, mainly the mechanics and how do we prioritize the watersheds?
• Other thoughts
  o Gillespie
    ▪ 3 documents
• Iowa Watershed Task Force or 2001
• Watershed summit 2003
• Iowa Watershed Quality Task Force 2007
  ▪ COFFELT will provide
    ▪ A compilation exists, Gillespie will look. DNR?
  o Times to meet?
    ▪ Members should anticipate attending or sending a designee instead.
  o Point of contact
    ▪ Provide questions
  o Sharp
    ▪ Frequency?
      ▪ Northey – Monthly to ramp up. November and December
        ▪ Around strategy – PS and NPS
        ▪ Preparation for the legislative session.
  o Northey – Memorandum of Understanding
    ▪ Working together as agencies.
      ▪ Take this back, review, provide comment.
  o Gillespie
    ▪ State Historical and Preservation Office
      ▪ Requirements
      ▪ Sims – has sought another way to respond to 106 requirements.
        ▪ NRCS does not have an agreement with SHPO.
        ▪ NRCS has ability to respond accordingly without an agreement.
        ▪ NRCS can do what needs to be done to assist DSC and its programs. Would use a State Agreement if it existed.
          ▪ Northey would like a conversation to follow up.
  o Northey
    ▪ What other items need to be followed up on?
      ▪ Cedar River Task Force
        ▪ Have them follow up?
          ▪ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has taken lead.
        ▪ Gipp – will take time to finish up.
          ▪ $ from HUD has been made available to establish a watershed management authority.
      ▪ Baird, IDOT
        ▪ Provided feedback from Jim Ross, previous member.
          ▪ Will be communicating with Director.
      ▪ Flood Plain Management,
        ▪ No identifiable person to recognize.
          ▪ Tom Oswald? Will be contacted as a follow up.
    ▪ Lawrence –
- Missouri River Flooding issue
  - Is there a group that will be involved?
    - Homeland Security is holding meetings.
    - Governor’s Office, IDOT
- Sims
  - Supplemental Appropriation for “other natural disasters” going through Congress. Not approved yet.
- Emergency Watershed Program
  - $600,000 available for match
    - Areas that are life-threatening
    - Areas that are non-life-threatening
      - 75% cost share for life-threatening
      - Engaged with Tom Oswald as part of interdisciplinary team.
- Sherry Timmons IDED
  - State of IA interagency Missouri River team ???
- General overarching issues on water quality and quantity and recover, not to consume but to assist.
- Robinson
  - IFBF research staff economic analysis for crop losses = $207 million for 6 counties.
    - [www.iowafarmbureau.com](http://www.iowafarmbureau.com)
- Northey highlighted MOREST meeting from previous evening.
  - Focus on recovery and management of the river system.
- Richards
  - US ACE has a report on the management of the MO river –
    - Coffelt will distribute.
    - Northey – There is a draft out. Open meeting in October?
- Coffelt will provide draft of notes. Corrections are welcome.
  - Final notes will be provided prior to the next meeting.
- Members should provide comments or insights for topics to address.
- WRCC should be useful to organizations to address water quality issues, how efforts can be improved, and how we can work together.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 PM.