

# Water Resources Coordinating Council December 12, 2017

## MEETING NOTES

### **Welcome & Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM. Copies of sign-in sheets showing member and public attendance are attached.

### **WRCC Member Agency Updates**

**EPA (Tate)**- Recently held meeting of regional point source providers including discussion of nutrient reduction strategies. Noted that Iowa is ahead of the curve on this and EPA will use IA approach to permitting with other states, especially in small communities. Karen Fluornoy is still tentatively planning to retire in December but is still helping with transition under new regional administrator (Jim Gulliford).

**DNR (Schnieders)**- Participated in ACWA workshop in Idaho this fall. Point source permitting for nutrient reduction in Hypoxia Task Force states is being adopted in different parts of the country as well. Looking to meet with point source stakeholders this winter in advance of year 5 under permitting for NRS. Permits issued continue to climb slowly. New permits will result in more monitoring data. DNR is using an intern to evaluate 1980-96 baseline data to re-evaluate percentage contribution of nutrient loading from point sources.

Nutrient Reduction Exchange (Iowa League of Cities project) will be able to use RIBITS system in a pilot initiative in order to determine nutrient reduction credit markets. Also looking at Nutrient Reduction Tracker through Walton Family Foundation as a means of measuring nutrient reduction. In 2017, a statewide nitrogen load estimate was modeled and will be included in the Annual Report.

**ISU Extension (Benning)**- Leadership changes at ISU- Wendy Wintersteen is now president of ISU and Joe Colletti is the interim CALS dean. NRS Annual Report was published yesterday. Copies of the executive summary were available to attendees of the meeting and the full report is on the NRS website.

Dr. Helmers is reviewing effectiveness of NRS practices and expects to be able to update the percentage reductions associated with types of practices, along with scenarios needed to achieve NRS goals.

ICM conference was held this fall. 11 sessions dealt with conservation/soil and water quality. The Agronomy Soil Testing Lab at ISU will be closing at the end of the year to the public. The Lab will only be used internally in the Department.

**IDPH (Schmitz)**- Deferred to presentation.

**UNI (Clayton)**- No report.

**HSEMD (Benson)**- HUD Iowa Watershed Approach partner meeting is Thursday in Des Moines. Partner match is up to \$106 million. A new project website has been launched as well.

HSEMD is working to integrate watershed plans with hazard mitigation plans at county level. Also working with Iowa Flood Center to develop parcel level inundation estimates.

Iowa Flood Mitigation Program is about half expended (\$658 million of \$1.3 billion). Annual report will be issued by January 15 on the HSEMD website. Adkins suggested using the WRCC as a means to increase awareness on flood risk to the general public and asked about establishing more detailed planning at the Council level to get the word out.

**Iowa DOT (Nicholson)**- ISU and IDOT are partnering on Asset Management and Extreme Weather Events proxy indicators. Iowa Highway Research Board is funding a study on this. Report will be DOT focused but should have relevance for other agencies.

DOT is implementing Federal Aid Swap in which federally funded projects can be swapped for state funds. This will reduce federal compliance requirements for local projects and free up federal dollars for more large projects. The swap impacts about \$150 million in projects underway or in planning. DOT has convened a committee as a part of this to look at environmental changes/impacts as a result of reduced compliance requirements.

**USACE (Thostenson)**- Updating regulation manual for Lake Red Rock and Saylorville Reservoir. Manual provides water level management guidance for large USACE lakes. Also working with The Nature Conservancy on Sustainable Rivers program, aimed at looking at other impacts/opportunities that can be achieved with different water level management strategies. A component of the modeling has been use of ACPF tools to look at subwatershed impacts and potential conservation practice siting.

Lake Red Rock is under a deviation to maintain the fall raise of 2 feet until March 1 (normally in December) in order to potentially avoid adverse downstream wildlife impacts. USACE is also looking at water quality and wildlife impacts of changes to water level management.

**FSA (Goettsch)**- New state FSA director had a baby boy yesterday and will be out for several weeks. State has 1.75 million acres in CRP currently (3<sup>rd</sup> most) and 109,000 contracts, by far the most of any state. Iowa's CRP is predominantly in small site contracts. Continuous signups are not open but FSA is taking receipts for service as they determine what acres are available for 2018.

**NRCS (Adkins)**- Recent guidance out on ephemeral gully control and repair- "Fix it, Don't Disk It" campaign is out to improve dealing with gullies as part of conservation compliance. Also receiving some funds under PL-566 program for the first time in several years. Will do some projects in Ringgold County and working with partners to scale up new structures and O&M on older sites. NRCS has re-labeled Conservation Collaboration Grant program as Iowa Partners for Conservation. The funding announcement is open now through January 31, 2018.

Working with The Nature Conservancy on a 4RPlus campaign in partnership with CF Industries. Many other partners are involved and emphasis is on business side and investment in soil for long-term profitability.

**USGS (Kalkhoff)**- Drought conditions are persisting in south central and northwest Iowa, although severity is not as bad as earlier in 2017. Result has been reduced streamflows and reduction in groundwater aquifer levels, impacting private and municipal wells.

USGS is in process of removing 12 nitrate sensors for the winter. All but one sensor is showing nitrate levels in 3-5 range. Also working on study to look at turbidity as a surrogate indicator of phosphorus.

Gillespie asked about drought conditions and absence of burning bans, especially as it pertains to CRP management in sensitive areas.

**IEDA (Geerts)**- Water and Sewer Fund applications have received 23 applications and made 11 awards in last two quarters. Also incorporating Green Streets criteria into Stormwater projects and providing some design assistance.

**IDALS (Gillespie)**- WQI statewide program has been largely deployed. Cover crops are still being planted. Signage is going up with cover crops as well.

IDALS is working with RMA on pilot program to buy down crop insurance premiums at \$5 per acre on acres that don't receive any other assistance.

Urban conservation demo project pre-applications have been received. We received 32 applications requesting more than \$3 million with \$18 million in partner investment. Full applications will be solicited in January and new projects will begin in April. Annual reviews are also underway on open projects.

#### **Runoff Risk Decision Support Tool Overview**

Dustin Goering, North Central Regional NOAA office, gave a presentation on the Runoff Risk Decision Support Tool that has been developed and deployed in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A copy of that presentation is available on the WRCC website.

#### **Microcystin/HAB Report**

Stu Schmitz, Iowa Dept of Public Health and Roger Bruner, Iowa DNR, gave a presentation on Microcystin levels and HABs in Iowa. Additionally, Dr. Grace Wilkinson with Iowa State University, gave a presentation on HAB research. Copies of those presentations can be found on the WRCC website.

#### **WPAC Update**

Ann Robinson, WPAC Vice Chair, provided an update on the WPAC. The WPAC met on October 31 and discussed the Annual Report and Areas of Agreement. Due to a change in staffing by the Chair agency, the Annual Report will be submitted to the Legislature in December and posted to the WPAC website.

#### **HUD Iowa Watershed Approach Update**

Allen Bonini, Iowa DNR, provided an update on the HUD Iowa Watershed Approach project. A meeting of the project partners will be held on December 14 in Des Moines. All of the project WMAs are now established and some are now procuring engineers and working on landowner outreach. Others are working on watershed plan development and public outreach. The project partners are also working to normalize GIS input for collection of data on practices.

#### **Public Comments (Please contain comment length to 3 minutes per person)**

There were no requests by the public to address the Council.

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 PM. The next meeting will be held in March 2018, date and location to be determined.

12/12/2017

<input type="checkbox"/>	WRCC Representative	Position	Organization
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 Bill Northey	Secretary (WRCC Chair)	Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Kim Reynolds Kayla Lyon	Governor Designee	Governor's Office Governor's Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 Chuck Gipp Bruce Trautman Bill Ehmy Adam Schnieders	Director Designee Designee	Iowa Department of Natural Resources Iowa Department of Natural Resources Iowa Department of Natural Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jim Gillespie Jake Hansen	Director Designee	IDALS - Division of Soil Conservation IDALS - Division of Soil Conservation
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Gerd Clabaugh Kenneth Sharp Stu Schmitz	Director Designee Designee	IA Department of Public Health IA Department of Public Health IA Department of Public Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6 Mark Schouten John Benson	Administrator Designee	Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7 Joe Coletti Jamie Benning	Acting Dean Designee	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 Susan Curry David Osterberg	Dean Designee	College of Public Health, University of Iowa College of Public Health, University of Iowa
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9 John Fritsch Maureen Clayton	Dean Designee	College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, UNI College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, UNI
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10 Mark Lowe Tamara Nicholson	Director Designee	Iowa Department of Transportation Iowa Department of Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11 Debi Durham Jeff Geerts	Director Designee	Iowa Economic Development Authority Iowa Economic Development Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 Dave Jamison Lori Beary	Executive Director Designee	Iowa Finance Authority Iowa Finance Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	13 Alec Scranton Larry Weber	Dean Designee	College of Engineering, University of Iowa College of Engineering, University of Iowa
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14 Steve Kalkhoff Jon Nania Gov	Acting Director	USGS, Iowa-Illinois Water Science Center
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15 Kurt Simon Marty Adkins	State Conservationist Designee	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16 Amanda DeLong-Curt Gouffich	State Executive Director	USDA, Farm Service Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	17 Annette Sweeney Kate Sand	State Director Designee	USDA, Rural Development USDA, Rural Development
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18 Jim Gulliford Mike Tate	Regional Administrator Designee	EPA-Region 7 EPA-Region 7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	19 Colonel Craig Baumgartner Diane Karnish Angela Freyer-muth	Rock Island District Commander Designee Designee	US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Zogg	Designee	National Weather Service

## WRCC Public Attendance Sign-In Sheet

(Public comments will be accepted at specified time on agenda)

	Name	Affiliation	Have Comments (Y/N)
1	Dennis Woelber	USFWS	N
2	Jenny Neppel	IRATLS-DSCWR	N
3	DUSTIN GOERING	NWS/NRPC	N
4	Laurie Nowatzke	ISU-CALS	N
5	Elizabeth Murphy	USGS	N
6	Steve Kalkhoff	USGS	N
7	PERRY THOSTENSON	USA CER	Y
8	Cara Morgan	Golden Hills RC&S	Y
9	LINDA KING	CDI	N
10	DON SIMMONS	State Hygienic Lab	N
11	Laura SARcone	DMWW	N
12	Adam Schwedes	Iowa DNR	
13	Jace Mikefs	Iowa Senate Dem Caucus	N
14	DeB Ryd	CSA	
15	Drew Bonini	DNR	N
16	Steve Schmitt	INRA	N
17	Charles Ikenberg	FYRA Engineering	N
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