

# Water Resources Coordinating Council

Tuesday, February 28, 2017  
Meeting Notes

## Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM. A sign-in sheet showing attendees is attached to the meeting notes.

## WRCC Member Agency Updates

HSEMD (Bartlett)- Working through recovery components of 2016 flooding in eastern Iowa and HUD Iowa Watershed Approach.

ISU (Lawrence)- Soil Health Conference was held in February with 350 attendees. Farmer meetings and cover crop seminars are ongoing. IA Nutrient Research Center has legislative event and collaborators meeting on March 9.

NRS Annual Measures reporting is coming up. ISU staff will begin working to collect information for this year's report this spring.

UNI (Clayton)- Getting ready for field season. Working with new faculty member on UAVs and ways to measure environmental quality.

DNR (Schneiders)- Working with CDI on Source Water Protection Initiative in seven water sources in the state. Also provided an update on point source permitting program status. Feasibility studies are coming in and in a couple of cases permittees are looking at installing nutrient removal equipment in their plans.

IEDA (Geerts)- IEDA is working to announce CDBG awards for storm water. Projects can now be funded quarterly for water/sewer, or on an open cycle for stormwater management when paired with SRF or IDALS funding. In December, the state of Iowa completed a comprehensive energy plan under leadership of Lt. Governor Reynolds. Part of the study focused on a connection between energy production and water quality, specifically dealing with biomass production. A task force is being organized to develop this component of the energy plan.

IDALS (Gillespie/Hansen)- Water Quality Initiative- The initial round of 8 targeted demonstration projects has begun their second phase, with projects continuing for 1-3 more years and expanding demonstration efforts. The next round of five projects is in the process of developing plans for its second phase as well. Statewide closed with \$3.8 Million currently obligated. Estimated over 850 first time users and 1000 prior users for cover crops. Cover crops are being applied and bills are coming in final numbers and survey results will be available this spring.

IDALS continues to work directly on two RCPP projects leveraging resources in targeted demonstration projects, and we are supporting initiatives in the Middle Cedar, Upper Cedar, and Fox River watersheds.

The Omaha District of the US Army Corps of Engineers is currently accepting comments on a draft EIS pertaining to management of the Missouri River Ecosystem for creation of shallow water habitat in order to meet Endangered Species Act requirements. IDALS is reviewing the Draft EIS along with other

members of the State Interagency Missouri River Authority and will submit comments to the Authority and if necessary to the Corps prior to the April 22 cutoff for those requests. We are also monitoring issues related to water supply rulemaking and potential changes to the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and the impacts of those proposals on agriculture in our state.

IDALS and DOT staff met in January to continue to discuss wetland programs and partnership potential as it relates to DOT's mitigation needs and opportunities to achieve water quality benefits in the process. So far we have outlined an agreement to communicate potential site information and if an opportunity to collaborate either on funding or project design arises we will consider that.

IDALS and DNR are working with EPA and USACE staff to explore the potential for a new regional permit that would expand our ability to install nutrient removal wetlands in the state. The permit would be similar to Regional Permit 34 which covers the CREP program, only in this case we would look to address projects that do not have federal funding involved or are not in the areas covered by the CREP initiative. Also working with NRCS to partner on delivery of engineering services for wetlands and edge-of field practices and hoping to finalize an agreement soon.

**Northey asked ISU to consider presenting in the future on the process for adding suitable practices/processes to the Nutrient Reduction Strategy.**

IDOT (Nicholson)- Working to pair with IDALS on wetland mitigation/water quality. Looking at other ways to partner on projects if possible, including design assistance/project review. AAHSTO annual meeting will be in Des Moines in July. The environmental committee will meet and will do some tours of Living History Farms to showcase some stream mitigation efforts on the property.

IDPH (Schmitz)-Working with partners to hold a water quality workshop in conjunction with Governor's public health conference. Details will follow from Iowa Public Health Association.

IIHR (Schilling)- In process of deploying nitrate sensors. New sensors going in to Rock and Floyd River basins. Also monitoring some practices for water quality treatment efficiency. Installing some phosphorus sensors in Cedar Rapids and in two other watersheds. The hope is to be able to better predict phosphorus loads in Iowa. Working with INRC to publish a paper on nutrient removal tied to oxbow restoration. Will likely pursue inclusion of the practice in the NRS.

NRCS (Adkins)- Six active RCPP projects going in Iowa right now. NRCS is interested in working with DOT to look at road structures and ways to partner on projects that protect infrastructure and improve soil conservation. Discussed Conservation Learning Labs project in partnership with Iowa Learning Farms. Conservation Collaboration Grants deadline is now March 31<sup>st</sup>. Next round of RCPP pre-proposals due April 21<sup>st</sup>. \$252 million available nationally.

NWS (Fowle)- Reported that February is the warmest on record in Des Moines, surpassing record in 1933. Precipitation has been near normal for February but at 30% of normal for the winter south of Highway 20. March outlook has no strong signals for temperature or precipitation.

Long-range forecasts indicate that temperatures will be above normal for the spring, and precipitation may be slightly above normal. Flood risk will be normal in the north and below normal in the rest of the state. The next spring flood outlook will be released on March 2.

### **Harmful Algal Blooms in Iowa**

Stu Schmitz, IDPH State Toxicologist gave a presentation on the agency's annual report on harmful algal blooms (HABs) and also public advisories/beach closures. [A copy of the presentation can be found on the WRCC website.](#)

Question on what level that the blue-green algae becomes visible. Schmitz will look at WHO report and follow-up. Discussion also followed on studies looking at weather as a predictor of events.

Schneiders mentioned DNR proposal to develop a HAB predictor that was not invited for full proposal. EPA has microcystin standards out for public comment. Looking at standards for swimming and water consumption. Comment period runs through March 20.

### **WQI Demonstration Grant Process Assessment**

Jim Gulliford, Soil and Water Conservation Society, gave a presentation on assessment work being completed by SWCS on the Water Quality Initiative demonstration projects. [A copy of the presentation can be found on the WRCC website.](#)

Comment on sustainable funding and partnerships- Need to ask companies participating for direct funding for projects.

### **Flood Risk Management Working Group Update**

Aimee Bartlett, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, HSEMD, gave a presentation on Disaster Recovery and Hazard Mitigation, focusing on avoided damages documented during Fall 2016 flooding as a result of hazard mitigation projects since the 2008 flooding on the Cedar River. [A copy of the presentation can be found on the WRCC website.](#)

### **WPAC Update and Presentation of Annual Report**

Clare Lindahl, CDI, is the WPAC chair. She presented the 2016 WPAC Annual Report to the Council, highlighting areas of agreement and plans for 2017. The WPAC is scheduled to meet again in April.

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

Keith Schilling, IIHR, provided an update on the HUD Iowa Watershed Approach project. Quarterly WMA meetings are still ongoing and some coordinators are being hired, while others are adding staff. Western Iowa WMAs are still in the organizational phase but will get going in the Spring. Additionally the Watershed planning process is being organized in the WMAs.

### **Public Comments and Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM. The next meeting will be held in late spring, location and date to be determined.

2/28/17

	WRCC Representative	Position	Organization
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 Bill Northey	Secretary (WRCC Chair)	Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Terry Branstad	Governor	Governor's Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kayla Lyon	Designee	Governor's Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 Chuck Gipp	Director	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bruce Trautman	Designee	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bill Ehm <sup>Adm</sup> <sub>John Nicholas</sub>	Designee	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 Jim Gillespie	Director	IDALS - Division of Soil Conservation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jake Hansen	Designee	IDALS - Division of Soil Conservation
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Gerd Clabaugh	Director	IA Department of Public Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kenneth Sharp	Designee	IA Department of Public Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stu Schmitz	Designee	IA Department of Public Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Mark Schouten	Administrator	Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	John Benson <sup>Ann ex</sup> <sub>Burkett</sub>	Designee	Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 Wendy Wintersteen	Dean	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	John Lawrence	Designee	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 Susan Curry	Dean	College of Public Health, University of Iowa
<input type="checkbox"/>	David Osterberg	Designee	College of Public Health, University of Iowa
<input type="checkbox"/>	9 John Fritsch	Dean	College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, UNI
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maureen Clayton	Designee	College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, UNI
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 Mark Lowe	Director	Iowa Department of Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tamara Nicholson	Designee	Iowa Department of Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 Debi Durham	Director	Iowa Economic Development Authority
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Geerts	Designee	Iowa Economic Development Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 Dave Jamison	Executive Director	Iowa Finance Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lori Beary	Designee	Iowa Finance Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	13 Alec Scranton	Dean	College of Engineering, University of Iowa
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Larry Weber <sup>Kerth</sup> <sub>Schilling</sub>	Designee	College of Engineering, University of Iowa
<input type="checkbox"/>	14 Kevin Richards	Director	USGS, Iowa Water Science Center
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jim Norris		
<input type="checkbox"/>	15 Kurt Simon	State Conservationist	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marty Adkins	Designee	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
<input type="checkbox"/>	16 Vacant	State Executive Director	USDA, Farm Service Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	17 Vacant	State Director	USDA, Rural Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kate Sand	Designee	USDA, Rural Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	18 Vacant	Regional Administrator	EPA-Region 7
<input type="checkbox"/>	Damon Frizzell	Designee	EPA-Region 7
<input type="checkbox"/>	19 Colonel Craig Baumgartner	Rock Island District Commander	US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Karnish	Designee	US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Angela Freyermuth	Designee	US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District

✓ Mark Fowler NWS

2/27/17

WRCC Public Attendance Sign-In Sheet  
(Public comments will be accepted at specified time on agenda)

15 total

	Name	Affiliation	Have Comments (Y/N)
1	Hidi Woerber	US FWS	N
2	Susie Dai	SHL UI	N
3	Andrew Anson	NOAA/NWS	N
4	Mike Fowle	NOAA/NWS	N
5	Laurie Nowatke	ISU	N
6	Susan Heathcote	Iowa Environ Council	N
7	Steve Falck	ELPC	N
8	John Van Wert	IODA	N
9	Ben Gleason	Iowa Corn	N
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