

Water Resources Coordinating Council

Friday July 26th, 2013 @ Iowa State Capitol

Meeting Minutes

WRCC Members/Designees Present:

Secretary Northey, Julie Vande Hoef, Chuck Gipp, Bill Ehm, Jim Gillespie, Todd Coffelt, Stu Schmitz, John Lawrence, Maureen Clayton, Scott Marler, Jay Mar, Marty Adkins, Karla Peiffer, Karen Fournoy, Diane Karnish, John Whitaker

Public Attendance:

Shawn Richmond, Harold Hommes, Jace Mikels, John Moreland, Deb Kozel, Ann Robinson, Linda Kinman, Eileen Bader, John Crotty, Kevin Condon, Matt Gronewald, Tyler Bettin, Ben Gleason, Luis Leon, Don Peterson, Karey Claghorn, Todd Suthpin, Bill Freeland, Chuck Isenhardt, Jerry Neppel, John Torbert, Steve Williams, Margaret Thomson, Jim Frederick, Allen Bonini, Roger Bruner, Dustin Vande Hoef

Meeting convened @ 9:04 AM CST

- Welcome and Introductions made by Secretary Northey
 - Public comments will be received at end of meeting
 - Call for additional agenda items made.
 - Discussion of Corps shallow water habitat projects added to agenda under other topics.
- Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy Update
- IDALS Updates
 - WRCC roles overviewed as identified in the strategy
 - Funding update on IDALS appropriations provided
 - \$2.4M for water quality initiative in FY14, \$4.4M in FY15
 - Funding for 1 full-time coordinator position
 - \$1.5M for nutrient research center at ISU
 - \$10M additional one-time funding for water quality initiative
 - \$7M additional C/S
 - \$3M for WIRB, 50% to support water quality initiative
 - Measures of Success Discussed
 - Focus on subset of priority HUC8 areas
 - Secretary Northey proposed formation of a measures workgroup comprised of WRCC membership including ISU, UI, UNI, IDALS, DNR, NRCS, USGS
 - ISU (John Lawrence) will chair the group
 - Need to look at what changes we are seeing and determine how those can be related to measures of success
 - Group will meet separate from WRCC and make recommendations back to the WRCC group

- This is one of the largest areas of need for WRCC to work on
 - Group meetings will be open to public to attend and listen
 - Coordinator Position
 - Position is moving forward through posting process
 - Want people to consider applying for this position and for all groups to help spread the word
 - Great potential opportunity
 - Administrative Rules
 - Draft rules have been developed to be filed soon. Draft of rules was handed out.
 - Rules will cover both the funds to be utilized in priority watersheds and those available statewide
 - Outreach/education and other efforts will follow normal DAS rules for procurement
 - Priority Watershed Demonstration Projects
 - Targeted to priority HUC8 areas identified by WRCC
 - Focus on demonstration of practices along with outreach/education efforts to disseminate information and encourage practice adoption by others
 - Projects will be done at HUC12 watershed scale, with potential for more than one HUC12 to be grouped together for a project
 - Applicants encouraged to partner with SWCDs
 - Request for Applications will be forthcoming soon and disseminated broadly
 - Evaluation and assessment requirements are included in the RFA
 - Measures workgroup will work to help support these projects over time
 - Communications/Outreach
 - Website in development for “CleanWaterIowa.org”
 - Include broad overviews of practices
 - Links to technical information
 - Links to resources for implementation efforts
 - Public education efforts
 - Essentially a one-stop shop for information related to nutrient strategy efforts
 - IDALS is looking for any recommendation that interested groups may have on how to add value to this website and public outreach campaign
- ISU Updates
 - Science team is continuing to meet and identify research priorities in support of the strategy
 - Nutrient Research center is a Regents center
 - Advisory council is being established
 - Advisory council meetings will be open to public
 - ISU and UI working on proposals for research to be funded through this center
 - Currently has a \$1.5M one-time funding appropriation for FY14, potential for future appropriations to continue support

- Center will have the opportunity to leverage and attract other funding sources to expand critical research needs
- DNR Updates
 - Lake restoration program has been very successful
 - Need to treat watersheds holistically as part of lake protection efforts
 - Only 20% of funds are utilized on dredging activities
 - \$8.6M funding for program currently
 - \$4M increase in REAP to \$16M will be helpful
 - \$2.1M available for land acquisition programs, landowners have been approaching DNR about lands they would like for DNR to acquire
 - DNR row-crop land contracts are requiring conservation practices in order to help lead by example
 - DNR has committed to creating a regular nutrient budget for the state
 - Handout detailing point source progress items was provided to group
 - Baseline discussions were identified as an item needing development
 - Where are we starting from with nutrient loads in order to measure progress
 - Roger Bruner of DNR leading effort to maintain an ambient baseline
 - Pulling together a technical workgroup standardize nutrient budget calculation process in order to achieve common method and understanding of how calculations are made
 - Primarily based on ambient water quality monitoring network
- Iowa DNR Nonpoint Source Management Plan Update (Allen Bonini, DNR)
 - Overview to include history and status update
 - Part of action items is to update WRCC on an annual basis
 - NPSMPs are a 319 requirement of EPA in order for states to receive funds
 - Typically they are updated every 5 years, Iowa's has been updated in 1989, 2000, and 2012
 - EPA calling for about half of states to update their plans soon
 - Process involves DNR, ISU, CDI, IDALS, and NRCS
 - Included an inventory of programs along with a facilitated visioning process
 - Over 50 organizational stakeholders that were grouped by commonality
 - Overall goal to have fishable, swimmable, drinkable clean water for all Iowans
 - NPSMP outlines 4 overall goals with 20 objectives
 - One measure of collaboration is participation by groups in WRCC and WPAC groups
 - Technical/financial assistance for 19 projects of \$2.8M, total partnership includes 67 projects for \$17M
 - Local watershed planning toolkit/workshops available
 - Outreach/Education toolbox for SWCD commissioners
 - Youth education and ILF initiatives
 - WMA creation and planning support
 - 30 HUC12 watersheds in Iowa have management plans
 - Over half of 319 funds must go directly to projects now
 - Have some staff support capability with funds

- Collaboration with partners is essential to pairing up funding sources to meet project needs
- USGS 2013 Water Quality Activities in Iowa (Kevin Richards, USGS)
 - USGS has 19 water science centers across the upper Midwest
 - USGS water alert is available to alert by text or e-mail when river stages exceed certain thresholds
 - Modern technology provides vastly more information on measuring flow as compared to the past transects that were done
 - 15 real-time nitrate sensors are currently deployed across Iowa
 - 84% of Boone River N loads in 2012 occurred during May, illustrates seasonal sensitivity on nutrient concerns
 - Ability to generate real-time loads can now be achieved by pairing real-time flow measurements and concentrations
 - Work continues to explore potential for oxbow restorations to provide water quality benefits
- Other Topics
 - Corps of Engineers Shallow Water Habitat Projects on Missouri River
 - Pallid sturgeon added to T&E species list in 1987
 - Major reconstruction of Missouri River has occurred over time
 - Sediment starvation cited as an issue
 - Typical SWH project is 2.5 to 5 feet in depth
 - 20,000 acres of SWH called for by Corps, equates to 30 acres per river mile average
 - 1 project alone can discharge 3-5 Million Cubic Yards of sediment material directly into the river
 - Issues exist surrounding the cost of dredging versus trucking removal of sediment
 - Issues also surrounding the consistency between the Corps projects and similar private projects
 - This a swift system with 7-9 mph flows
 - Degradation of ditch bed and bank due to sediment starvation
 - Many competing uses and interests in management plan
 - DNR issues 401 water quality certification permits for these types of projects
 - Public meetings with the Corps have been ongoing to gain input and public comment on the SWH projects
 - Looking into all alternatives for soil disposal
 - Complicated by calling for farmer led efforts to keep sediment and nutrients out of streams while allowing the corps to discharge these materials directly into the river
 - Corps is required by USFWS to create habitat while maintaining water quality objectives

- Upcoming Events
 - 2013 Midwest Construction Expo & Field Day
 - July 31st & August 1st
 - LICA farm east of Melbourne, IA
 - Century & Heritage Farm Awards
 - August 13th @ 9am at Iowa State Fair
 - 367 Century and 67 Heritage farms receiving awards this year
 - Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards
 - August 15th @ 9am at Penningroth Center at Iowa State Fair
 - 63 awards this year
 - Iowa Learning Farms Webinar on Iowa Nutrient Strategy
 - August 21st @ 11:30am
 - CDI Annual Conference
 - September 4th-5th, Sheraton Hotel - West Des Moines
 - Hypoxia Task Force Fall 2013 Meeting
 - Minneapolis, MN September 23-25, 2013
- Future Meeting Dates
 - September 26th @ 9am – Location TBD
- Public Comments
 - Linda Kinman
 - Comments highlighting nitrate issues this spring
 - Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers both had high levels at the same time, which is an uncommon occurrence
 - Handout provided to group with graphs of nutrient levels over time
 - 2013 was the first time the nitrate removal facility at Des Moines Water Works has been run since 2007
 - Capacity of this system is 10M gallons/day, doesn't remove all of the nitrate in the water
 - Commented that there isn't time to let a voluntary nutrient reduction strategy be implemented
 - Jay Mar
 - Need to work collectively on improving efficiency of cost-share and technical assistance delivery
 - Conservation plans are at the heart of efforts
 - Includes agribusiness and corporate partner efforts as well

Meeting adjourned at 11:46am