

Water Resources Coordinating Council

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Meeting Notes

Call to Order and Virtual Meeting Logistics

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM via GoToMeeting. A roster showing members of the council in attendance is attached to these notes. Meeting logistics were briefly reviewed.

WRCC Member Agency Updates (All)

USACE (Sattinger) – USACE will hold a state partnering meeting on November 5th. Looking at meeting in Des Moines, format still to be determined. USACE would like members to let them know what topics they would like to discuss at that meeting.

NESP is authorized this year for Mississippi and Illinois rivers at \$4.5 million. First new funding in several years. Working on systematic lock and dam/ecosystem construction projects. About \$20 million in construction projects in queue. USACE continues with UMRR program throughout the Mississippi River basin. Feasibility studies and construction projects are ongoing. 16 new projects added system-wide in last year. Projects are ongoing on USACE managed reservoirs. Pump station nearing completion at Saylorville. Hydroelectric facility now online at Lake Red Rock. Working on water control plan at Coralville Reservoir.

NRCS (Hubbert) - Jon Hubbert has been announced as the new State Conservationist for Iowa and will start in that role in October. CSP and EQIP numbers in Iowa remain strong with several new contracts underway. Partnering on disaster relief programs was essential to speedy recovery given some challenges with federal regulations on AGI.

FSA (DeJong) – Very busy summer with disaster recovery related to drought and derecho. ECP and EFRS (Emergency Forest Restoration Program). Several requests from county committees are being prepared to determine recovery needs. Stretch between Polk and Linn counties is worst. Linn County has active ECP and 8 others are in process of receiving approvals. CRP renewals are wrapping up. Three signups this year with 9500 offers accepted on 260,000 acres. About 1/3 are approved. Another 3000 offers submitted for continuous signups. Record number of contracts anticipated this year, due to two years of one-year extensions. 2021 should slow down considerably with re-enrollments. County offices statewide are in different stages of phased reopening. Many are open by appointment only, but cases seem to be rising recently in field offices.

USGS (Nania) – Lots of fluctuations in streamflow monitoring conditions since last meeting. Large spikes in eastern Iowa followed by pronounced drought conditions statewide. Recent rainfalls have returned flows to normal patterns. All water quality sensors are fully operational statewide at this point.

NWS (Zogg)- NWS discussed current temperature and precipitation outlooks. **A slide presentation is included with these meeting notes.**

ISU (Helmert) – INRC received 43 proposals and have funded 11 new proposals. Staff has been active in virtual Extension and Outreach with weekly ILF webinars, ILF virtual field days, ISU virtual field days and transitioning to virtual winter meetings. Staff has also begun preparation of this year's INRS Annual Report as well.

UNI (Clayton)- Resuming field work over the summer, although there are delays in lab work. Tallgrass Prairie Center completed virtual field camp with Practical Farmers of Iowa funding. More than 500 participants this summer. The course content can be viewed at <https://www.tallgrassprairiecenter.org/botany-beginners>. Lab work has shifted to outdoor classroom work. Staff is working to continue this remotely and indoors during the winter.

University of Iowa (Thorne) – Continue to promote clean water as a means of maintaining recreational facilities open. University is using Lake Macbride as a public recreation and health asset for outreach purposes.

U of I Engineering (Weber) – Deployed 38 new stream sensors across state (30 funded by IDNR). New total is 264 sensors that complement USGS gauges. Community-based inundation maps completed for Freeport, bringing mapped communities to more than 30. IHR will host International Conference on Flood Management in 2021. Continuing work on partnerships, including First Street Foundation (<https://firststreet.org/>) and new contracts for flood studies following Iowa Watershed approach model. Other states in particular are using hydrologic modeling approach to assess flood risks. Also working with IEDA on Missouri River flood risk assessment.

DOT (Brink) – No specific comments to update committee with today.

IEDA (Geerts) – 7 new Water/Sewer projects being announced next week. US EDA Missouri River planning project is underway. Looking at land use planning scenarios in southwest Iowa as part of that project. Most projects for Iowa Watershed approach are through environmental review and remaining projects will be constructed in 2021. Energy team partnered with Iowa Falls and Muscatine to consider retrofits to wastewater facilities with focus on energy efficiency and water quality.

HSEMD (Giofreddi)- Continuing to process disaster funding for 2019 flooding and now adding 2020 derecho as active disaster projects. Also looking at Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) as a means of new funding opportunities for resiliency projects (formerly pre-disaster mitigation). Some money will be formula-based and some will be competitive.

EPA Region 7 (Tate)- Water Reuse Action Plan is ongoing (<https://www.epa.gov/waterreuse/national-water-reuse-action-plan-collaborative-implementation-version-1>) and Phase 2 is underway. More interest from stakeholders in wake of drier conditions. Pre-publication notice is out for financial capability for water/sewer affordability. Notice is linked at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-09/documents/pre-publication_frn-fca.pdf. Two new source water planning efforts have been approved in Iowa to build on the four recently completed. Region 7 states are also working to improve sewer service area surveillance with help from EPA.

DNR (Schneiders) – Working with water and sewer plant operators to ensure continuity of testing/operations in case an operator is exposed or infected with COVID-19. Some facilities lost power during derecho but backup power sources meant no disruption of operations. Also have a couple of communities working with DNR to address water shortages (City of Casey in particular, others in west-central Iowa). New source water projects are underway in Montezuma and Lamoni. Dale Garner is retiring as Conservation and Recreation Division Director at the end of September.

IDALS (Hansen) – Signups are ongoing for statewide management practices cost share. Already more than \$6 million in obligations, which would be a record high. We are hoping to add cover crop acres, particularly in areas of early harvest due to disasters. IDALS has also received an extension and \$10 million in new funding to continue the Midwest Ag Water Quality Program statewide. IDALS is also looking to leverage active WQI projects through the currently open RCPP solicitation and the MRBI program. Staff met with Linn County and Cedar Rapids area officials on the potential use of wood chips from derecho for bioreactors. Factors discussed were timing of coordination, ability to transport chips to sites, and proper sizing of chips. IDALS is also working to evaluate WQI efforts on an ongoing basis, and we are working with our REAP funding to try and restore damages to windbreaks.

The Hypoxia Task Force will meet virtually September 30 and October 1. The public meeting is morning of October 1 and will feature updates from states on progress implementing nutrient reduction strategies, as well as presentations from NGO & private sector partners on basin-wide collaboration opportunities. The LSU and NOAA-led annual measurement of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico was conducted during the last week of

July and showed a hypoxic zone of 2,114 square miles, which is the third-smallest zone measured since NOAA began surveying the region in 1985.

USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue visited Iowa on September 3rd and met with Governor Reynolds, Senator Ernst, and other leaders to visit several projects, including a recently completed CREP wetland in Hardin County. Sec. Perdue signed the derecho disaster declaration while in attendance and all of the leaders had an opportunity to view crop damages from drought and storms from the air.

Black Hawk Lake NWQI Evaluation Presentation

Dr. Michelle Soupir with Iowa State University gave a presentation at 10:00 AM on the evaluation results of a paired watershed study in the Black Hawk Lake project area in Sac County. **A copy of the presentation is included with the meeting notes.**

Flood Reduction and Nutrient Reduction Coordination

Jim Marwedel, HSEMD planner, gave a presentation on coordination efforts between flood reduction and water quality initiatives throughout the state. **A copy of the presentation is included with the meeting notes.**

HUD Iowa Watershed Approach (Larry Weber, University of Iowa)

Larry Weber gave an update on the HUD Iowa Watershed Approach. The project is wrapping up year 4 out of 5 and now runs through December 31, 2021. All but one watershed plan is completed and approved, and that plan will be done next month. One project has completed construction and three more are underway. All projects will be releasing more construction projects in 2021. Some of the projects have more demand than available funding, and all are looking for ways to continue funding their staff. Storm Lake's project is also nearing completion.

Public Comments

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

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 AM. The next meeting will be held in late November or early December and will be a virtual meeting.

	WRCC Representative	Position	Organization
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 Mike Naig	Secretary (WRCC Chair)	Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Kim Reynolds	Governor	Governor's Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Nate Ristow</i>	<i>Designee</i>	Governor's Office
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 Kayla Lyon	Director	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Adam Schneiders</i>	<i>Designee</i>	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 Susan Kozak	Director	IDALS - Division of Soil Conservation & Water Quality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Jake Hansen</i>	<i>Designee</i>	IDALS - Division of Soil Conservation & Water Quality
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Gerd Clabaugh	Director	IA Department of Public Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Kenneth Sharp</i>	<i>Designee</i>	IA Department of Public Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Designee</i>	IA Department of Public Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Joyce Flinn	Director	Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Larry Giofreddi</i>	<i>Designee</i>	Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7 Dan Robison (Matt Helmers on)	Dean	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Jamie Benning</i>	<i>Designee</i>	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 Susan Curry	Dean	College of Public Health, University of Iowa
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Peter Thorne</i>	<i>Designee</i>	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"/>	<i>Maureen Clayton</i>	<i>Designee</i>	College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, UNI
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 Scott Marler	Director	Iowa Department of Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Tamara Nicholson</i>	<i>Designee</i>	Iowa Department of Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Ken Brink</i>	<i>Designee</i>	Iowa Department of Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 Debi Durham	Director	Iowa Economic Development Authority
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Jeff Geerts</i>	<i>Designee</i>	Iowa Economic Development Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 Debi Durham	Executive Director	Iowa Finance Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Lori Beary</i>	<i>Designee</i>	Iowa Finance Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	13 Alec Scranton	Dean	College of Engineering, University of Iowa
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Larry Weber</i>	<i>Designee</i>	College of Engineering, University of Iowa
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14 Jon Nania	Acting Director	USGS, Iowa-Illinois Water Science Center
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Steve Kalkhoff</i>	<i>Designee</i>	USGS, Iowa-Illinois Water Science Center
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15 Jon Hubbert	State Conservationist	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Scott Cagle</i>	<i>Designee</i>	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16 Amanda DeJong	State Executive Director	USDA, Farm Service Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	17 Grant Menke	Acting State Director	USDA, Rural Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Kate Sand</i>	<i>Designee</i>	USDA, Rural Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	18 Jim Gulliford	Regional Administrator	EPA-Region 7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Mike Tate</i>	<i>Designee</i>	EPA-Region 7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	19 Colonel Steven Sattinger	Rock Island District Commander	US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Jason Smith</i>	<i>Designee</i>	US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Angela Freyermuth</i>	<i>Designee</i>	US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Jeff Zogg</i>	<i>Designee</i>	National Weather Service