

# **Water Resources Priorities**

## **Iowa Water Conference 2015**

# **Background: Iowa Water Center**

- **Water Resources Research Institute for Iowa**
- **One of 54 centers in the United States and its territories**
- **~\$92K annually for research, outreach and education related to Iowa's water resources**
- **Coordinates statewide committee for annual Iowa Water Conference**

# Background: Iowa Water Conference

- Held annually in March in Ames
- 300-400 attendees
- Brings together multi-disciplinary organizations and institutions
- 9<sup>th</sup> annual event in 2015 sought to produce something useful

# **Background: White Paper Development**

- **Guided discussion held at the end of the 2015 Iowa Water Conference**
- **Notes were organized and transposed into single page document**
- **White paper was reviewed by conference committee and IWC advisory board members**

# 2015 Water Resources Priorities

- **Lack of calls for greater investments of public money**
  - **Stability of existing funding repeatedly identified as imperative**
- **Soil quality and soil management highlighted for importance to both urban and agricultural watersheds**
  - **Priority on public awareness of importance of functional soils; topsoil requirements in new developments**

# 2015 Water Resources Priorities

- **Nutrient Reduction Strategy**
  - Water quality topic most often mentioned
  - Establishing goals and timelines and water monitoring seen as vital to public acceptance
- **Building partnerships/collaboration**
  - Identified as “critical to success”
  - Most successful watershed projects had a consistent coordinator (funding stability) to build partnerships among different stakeholders – broadening the circle

# 2015 Water Resources Priorities

- **Specific program and policy elements**
  - **Realigning SWCDs with watersheds instead of by county**
  - **Developing more land owner tax incentives for conservation implementation**
  - **Increasing edge-of-CAFO water quality monitoring**
  - **Promoting watershed plans and programs through radio and television**
  - **Utilizing the IDNR 319 funding model to sustain and prioritize water quality programs**

# 2015 Water Resources Priorities

- **Education about soil and water related issues**
  - **Improved soil/water curriculum for K-12**
  - **Statewide media campaign to raise watershed awareness**

# Continue the discussion...

- What does greater stability in funding look like? From where does it come? What vehicles are in place to secure funding?
- What size of watershed would delineate new Soil and Water Conservation Districts? How would we transition?
- What framework exists or could exist for additional tax incentives for conservation implementation?

# Continue the discussion...

- How can we incorporate soil and water conservation into K-12 curriculum?
- What organization(s) is/are the appropriate body to spearhead a campaign for watershed awareness and education? From where does funding come?

# Contact information

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