

Water Resources Coordinating Council

Thursday, December 6th, 2012 @ Iowa Corn Growers Association

Meeting Minutes

WRCC Members/Designees Present:

Secretary Northey, Jim Gillespie, Dean Lemke, Stu Schmitz, Col. Mark Deschenes, Diane Karnish, Scott Marler, Lori Beary, Karla Peiffer, Julie Vande Hoef, John Whitaker, John Lawrence, Todd Coffelt, Larry Weber

Public Attendance:

Shawn Richmond, Jerry Neppel, Virginia Soelberg, Cody McKinley, Mindy Larsen Poldberg, Jen Filipiak, Jan Glendening, David Osterberg, John Crotty, Roger Wolf, Rick Robinson, Josh Mandelbaum, Charles Isenhardt, Tim Hall, Louis Leon, Perry Beaman, Steve Falck

Meeting convened @ 10:05 AM CST

Introductions made by Secretary Northey

- Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy Update
 - Draft strategy was released for public comment on November 19, 2012
 - Strategy documents available for review at <http://www.nutrientstrategy.iastate.edu/>
 - Comments can be submitted via the website or also mailed in
 - Deadline for comments is January 4, 2013
 - Requests for extensions to comment period are under consideration
- Nonpoint Source Overview
 - Strategy sets forth concepts that work plans can be developed around
 - Focus on voluntary framework to move forward and make progress in nutrient reductions with the best available technologies today while continuing to assess and evaluate nutrient water quality standards
 - 22 action items outlined under the nonpoint section
 - 12/22 of the items have actions already underway today
- Point Source Overview
 - DNR staff expressed their support for the joint strategy on behalf of Director Gipp who was unable to attend
 - Point source strategy focused on 102 major municipal and 28 industrial point sources
 - Look to implement nutrient load reductions through permits to achieve reductions based on implementing best available technologies for biological nutrient removal
 - Overall goal of 45% N & P reductions achieved through joint point and nonpoint strategy. Estimates that point source reductions will result in 4% N and 16% P reductions while nonpoint reductions will make up the balance with 41% N and 29% P reductions
- Science Assessment Overview

- Thorough literature review of existing science and research conducted
- Summary and detailed reports on assessment are in strategy documents
- Science documents underwent a peer reviewed process
- Starting point was to get a baseline assessment of nutrient loads
- Assessment of available practices and applicability to provide framework for scaling up and combining practices to achieve load reductions
- Clearly shows that a combination of in-field and edge-of-field practices will be needed to achieve goals
- Costs included in report are farm scale costs to implement practices and do not include overhead/administrative costs
- Equal annualized cost calculated to compare cost efficiency of practices
- Broad outreach underway through ISU Extension through several meetings – Crop Advantage Series, pesticide applicators, manure applicators, CCAs
- Comment – Science assessment was a very complex and lengthy process to assimilate the information on available practices. Is a one of a kind assessment that has not been done anywhere else in the US. Provides a roadmap for farmers to understand what practices they can implement and what will be needed.
- Questions on Strategy Overview
 - What is the process for comments received?
 - Look forward to hearing all comments. Deadline for submittal is Jan. 4th
 - Comments can be submitted through the website or mailed in
 - Response to comments will be a group effort by IDALS/DNR/ISU
 - Clarified that this is not a rulemaking effort. Comments were not required by law but Iowa chose to solicit public comments.
 - Iowa is only state to solicit public comments on strategy. Other states have not considered soliciting public comments as part of their strategies
 - Will public meetings be held on the strategy?
 - Discussion of informational meetings is underway. Expect announcement soon.
 - Comment – Need to work with urgency to establish baseline. Iowa is far ahead of neighbors with monitoring.
 - What is our baseline load?
 - Nutrient load from Iowa can be estimated. Strategy calls for enhanced efforts to develop nutrient budget for Iowa. 2012 update was utilized for strategy.
 - Has there been feedback from EPA?
 - Strategy has been discussed with EPA and they have been asked to provide feedback. The strategy does not undergo an EPA approval process, but their input is being sought.
 - Comment – The strategy is an unprecedented movement for Iowa and represents a critical effort for nonpoint and point sources to move forward together. Iowa Soybean Association strongly supports the strategy and approach. Will take site specific planning and tools to implement.
- CWSRF Sponsored Water Quality Projects

- \$200-\$300M/year in loans for municipal infrastructure
- Reduced interest rates on loans to support grants for water quality projects
- 1 pilot project underway today that pairs a \$64M water treatment plant project with a pervious paving project
- Will be an EPC meeting in January to adopt Intended Use Plan for funds. Anticipate a June 2013 deadline for projects to apply for funds.
- WMAs, SWCDs, and others are eligible to apply in project watersheds. Would develop a 28E agreement.
- Comments are being solicited until December 17th, 2012
- Great opportunity for leveraging resources
- USACE Topic
 - Col. Mark Deschenes introduced himself as the new Rock Island Commander for the Corps and stressed importance of the Corps being involved with the WRCC
 - Continuing Authority program is available
 - Flood risk management
 - Ecosystem restoration
 - Corps maintains an open door to access their resources
 - Have begun working with the state hydrology group
 - See nutrient strategy as opportunity and sign of genuine public/private interest in advancing environmental goals
- Other Topics
 - Comment – Would like to get EPA Region 7 representation at more WRCC meetings
 - Comment - Drought response and climate change topics may be of interest to the WRCC at future meetings
 - Question – Should a working group on improving soil management be formed?
 - Question – How can working groups between WRCC and WPAC be formed?
 - Comment – Larry Weber indicated that letters of support are being sought for the ISU/UI proposal to establish a national nutrient research center in Iowa.
- Upcoming Events
 - Cover Crops Conference: Practical Strategies for Your Farm
 - December 13th -14th (Altoona)
 - <http://www.swcs.org>
 - Conservation Partnership Day (Capitol) – January 22nd
 - Iowa Water Conference (Ames)– March 4th – 5th
- Future Meeting Dates
 - Tuesday, January 8, 2012 – Des Moines @ Capitol

Meeting adjourned at 11:55am