

Water Resources Coordinating Council

State Capitol, Room 103

October 4, 2011, 1:05 PM

The meeting was called to order by Secretary Northey. Introductions of WRCC members and guests followed.

Secretary Northey welcomed attendees and provided a general synopsis of recent actions affecting the WRCC.

- Legislation basis – Fenton distributed 466B. Northey highlighted the move, reflected on previous WRCC.
- Jim Gillespie, DSC, briefly reviewed Watershed Quality planning Taskforce, the original legislation that initiated WRCC focusing on:
 - Brief summary of meetings that were held. Topics focused on quality, shifted to other topics.
 - Identified a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), of which copies were distributed to members.
 - Brief overview of a study of the Iowa-Cedar River Basin
 - A concern regarding State Historical and Preservation Office and expediency of returning Phase 1 reviews was overviewed.
 - Some items may still be active by virtue of not being completed within the last administration.
 - Acknowledgment that previous WRCC efforts waned as with many efforts from the WQPTF
- Dialogue among members regarding overlapping/cross tasking may have existed.
 - Important to focus on high priority areas that affect water quality.
 - Don't give mixed signals between agencies will be key.
- Discussion regarding reporting and groups providing reports versus focusing on efforts and objectives of the WRCC
- Effort to reinforce purpose and efforts of WRCC to focus on coordinating.
 - How will this function?
 - Determining priorities – how?
 - Controlling ancillary efforts – how?
- Input from group:
 - Chuck Gipp, IDNR
 - Water quality issues such as nutrients
 - How are agencies going to cooperate?
 - Voluntary systems
 - Meet needs of nutrients
 - Regulatory avoidance

- Limitations in personnel and resources
- Rich Sims, NRCS
 - Flood of 2008
 - WRCC has opportunity to benefit from that working with supervisors at the county level – flood plains, planning, working as a group to utilize land as best as we can. Investment now, returns later.
 - Using committee for watershed planning
- Northey –
 - Combining quality and quantity efforts –
 - Balancing needs, priorities, national, local,
 - People are asking, legislation is saying.
 - CONTEXT of Water Quality Discussion
 - IDALS and IDNR sat down with EPA Region 7
 - Interested in water quality strategy for N and P reduction
 - Working together, not stepping on toes, not leaving holes undone.
 - Point source versus Non-Point Source – roles and responsibilities
 - Alluded to 2 efforts, voluntary, in the coming months.
 - Some are mandatory, looking at going beyond that.
 - Should have something in the next few months
 - IDNR on point source
 - IDALS on Non-Point source
- GIPP
 - Reemphasized that parallel efforts do not exist.
 - Get agencies on board to add to the draft document
- Northey
 - IDALS working with ISU to look at science on the farm to look at the impacts
 - What do studies say are the actual reductions?
 - What are differences between various areas of the state?
 - Effects of N application timing?
 - Cover crops?
 - Bio-reactors?
 - Have met. Reviewed what the first draft looked like.
 - What is working? Not? Why?
 - Producer's efforts. Why they changed? Didn't?
- Lawrence -
 - Science assessment is part of the overall strategy.
 - In the coming weeks - making it transparent.
- Northey –
 - Looking at ways it can cross in to programs – State and Federal
- Ehm –
 - Point Source

- Had meeting yesterday – Point source industry and staff
 - Reviewed model from the State of Kansas
 - Meeting next week with environmental groups –
 - Will be discussing how PS and NPS will be married
 - Meeting with IDALS about how they will be married in the coming weeks.
 - Referred to how it will be presented to the public.
 - Northey
 - Where to find dollars – limited.
 - Working together to find ways to generate the dollars.
 - Be proactive before regulation comes.
 - Sims
 - Efforts in USDA – NRCS
 - MRBI – 9 watersheds –
 - \$ focused on watershed quality practices
 - Cover crops, bioreactors, WRP, WREP, grassed waterways
 - 6330 active contracts in state, most in nation
 - 220 million for conservation practices in EQIP
 - 1330 easements
 - 220 million? - not sure on this.
 - Keep it on a voluntary basis
 - Northey
 - Farm Bill in next year or two
 - Programs focused on water quality or soil quality.
 - Potential to meld together. Not sure what it will look like.
 - Help producers with livestock and or crop operations
 - Whitaker
 - CREP- 10 year anniversary
 - Will do what we can to keep CREP going in Iowa
 - Farm bill is up to congress, not administration
 - Cooperative agreements are good
 - Northey –
 - Explained functionality of CREP
- What are other issues –
 - Ken Sharp, IDPH – from public health – issues with water quality based on ties to public health concerns.
 - Is there any linkage to Healthy State Initiative from Governor’s office?
 - Water, Air, ag practice? What are connections?
 - May be more appropriate down the road.
 - Karla Pifer, UDSA, RD
 - Financing water and wastewater systems

- Smallest of the small rural communities
 - Escalating cost of infrastructure
 - Partners with SRF and CDBG
 - What can this group do to help partner more?
 - Up to 10,000 population
 - Typically 1,000 and less (20 households)
 - Federal dollars are a restriction
 - Their funds allocated at \$20 million per year
 - 30% grants
 - 70% loans –
 - Are not available to give communities the funds they need
 - Guidelines?
 - None for Maximum. Communities determine whether or not it is feasible.
 - Priority lists? Criteria?
 - Leverage? Location?
 - Have a current priority system with a score.
 - For most part they do not have a waiting list. Typically come to them because they HAVE to fix a problem.
 - Changes in Fed financing?
 - Should be funded, but most likely reduced.
 - What are the challenges?
 - Rule changes?
 - EHM – Communities are challenged to come up with funds.
 - Pifer – Utility group has been very active.
 - Have felt beaten up on by communities. Waiting to be requested versus seeking opportunities.
- Northey -
 - We need to be able to connect them.
- Gillespie
 - Un-sewered communities can be part of the WIRB applicants, there is a requirement to identify connection between un-sewered communities and watersheds.
- NORTHEY –
 - Other pieces
 - Funding, PS, NPS, work groups in general.
 - Previous WRCC –
 - Iowa-Cedar River Basin Study

- Implementation
 - 319 Water Quality projects
 - 50-60 active
 - GILLESPIE
 - WSPF and 319 – joint application
 - Reviewed application process and award
 - Gillespie approached overlap.
 - SRF (State Revolving Fund)
 - WIRB
 - How do we make ourselves aware of this?
- NORTHEY –
 - WPAC (Watershed Priority Advisory Committee)
 - Robinson
 - Reviewed background and objectives of the WPAC.
 - Purpose, report, priorities. – Submitted – is available.
 - Reviewed work of WRCC and legislative history
 - Meeting Wednesday, October 12. Will be a report in December of this year.
 - Communication with WPAC and vice versa with WRCC.
 - What goes on between the meetings – how to achieve this
 - NGOs looking in from the outside, need
 - Regular communication
 - Regular collaboration in-between meetings.
 - Northey –
 - Part of this is to work together and better and communicate together and better.
- What are the things that need to be done?
 - Prioritization
 - How do we prioritize?
 - Take everybody that comes.
 - We depend on aggressive groups to make a big difference.
 - Focus on specific watersheds
 - How do we prioritize?
 - How do we do this?
 - For future discussion, would make sense to discuss how WRCC would make decisions. Take home for thought and homework. Focus on this a figure it out, mainly the mechanics and how do we prioritize the watersheds?
- Other thoughts
 - Gillespie
 - 3 documents

- Iowa Watershed Task Force or 2001
 - Watershed summit 2003
 - Iowa Watershed Quality Task Force 2007
 - COFFELT will provide
 - A compilation exists, Gillespie will look. DNR?
- Times to meet?
 - Members should anticipate attending or sending a designee instead.
- Point of contact
 - Provide questions
- Sharp
 - Frequency?
 - Northey – Monthly to ramp up. November and December
 - Around strategy – PS and NPS
 - Preparation for the legislative session.
- Northey – Memorandum of Understanding
 - Working together as agencies.
 - Take this back, review, provide comment.
- Gillespie
 - State Historical and Preservation Office
 - Requirements
 - Sims – has sought another way to respond to 106 requirements.
 - NRCS does not have an agreement with SHPO.
 - NRCS has ability to respond accordingly without an agreement.
 - NRCS can do what needs to be done to assist DSC and its programs. Would use a State Agreement if it existed.
 - Northey would like a conversation to follow up.
- Northey
 - What other items need to be followed up on?
 - Cedar River Task Force
 - Have them follow up?
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has taken lead.
 - Gipp – will take time to finish up.
 - \$ from HUD has been made available to establish a watershed management authority.
 - Baird, IDOT
 - Provided feedback from Jim Ross, previous member.
 - Will be communicating with Director.
 - Flood Plain Management,
 - No identifiable person to recognize.
 - Tom Oswald? Will be contacted as a follow up.
 - Lawrence –

