

Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC)

November 2, 2011

State Capitol, Room 102

Meeting Minutes

Sec Northey called the meeting to order at 8:32, November 2, 2011.

Introductions of WRCC members and attendees followed. Members present: Sims-NRCS, Gipp-IDNR, Richards-USGS, Whipple-, Bill Menner, USDA-R&D, Beary-IFA, Clayton-, Lemke (DSC).

Secretary Northey began with brief overview of the October meeting, reaffirming focus on water quality.

Dean Lemke (DSC) provided a review of Non-Point Source strategy. Dean Lemke reviewed the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan – call for Mississippi River states to have nutrient reduction strategies by 2013. Iowa has started process with scientific assessments and will be engaging public for support. Lemke reviewed the basis for the effort and action plan identifying research, approach, and substantive issues. Lemke provided a handout that reviewed a case study on the Cedar River Watershed for individual practices to achieve nitrogen load reductions and their cost, effectiveness and how to measure their impact. Secretary Northey addressed the strategy in reference to funding for current programs in relation to the amount of impact/level of effectiveness reaffirming the need for coordination. Lemke outlined a general timeframe for the strategy, which included the need for Point Source to be involved. Lemke identified a public comment period that may last six months, as part of the process. The statewide nutrient reduction strategy is being developed to address both N and P nutrient load reductions for both Point and Non-Point Sources.

Question = Do the practices have the ability to address more than one concern? Can their impact be measured? Lemke provided a response that included the premise of water quality. Secy. Northey reinforced the need for coordination between agencies and their respective efforts.

Gipp (IDNR) provided update of Point Source Program efforts. Gipp provided update that identified IDNR as the lead for the Point Source effort in collaboration with IDALS as lead for the Non-Point Source effort. Gipp outlined IDNR's effort to formulate a strategy with Industry input. Gipp highlighted IDNR's effort with smaller, non-sewered communities and the reality of addressing this concern while keeping the high cost in mind. Iowa League of Cities, ISAC, and IDNR have been working together.

Question: What is the scale? What is the cost? Gipp – Costs for upgrades in sewer treatment plants and working with current infrastructure can have an impact of 8%.

Menner (USDA_RD) – Ottumwa is applying for an IDOT Tiger Grant worth \$16 million.

Northey - Are communities waiting for relief? – Gipp – Identified that communities have made Legislators aware of this impending, overwhelming cost– SF407- would provide rules that may address the timeline for meeting requirements. Anticipates Legislature to address this concern. One of the bigger challenges is separating storm water from waste water for treatment, but would help in lower costs for the individual required treatments.

Northey – How many applications in Rural Development? Karla Peifer - \$20=23 million for work – 12 systems last year for waste water. Not so much. RD partners with CDBG. Can partner with SRF. RD into projects for 90 – 100% for project costs. RD unable to anticipate where funds will be, but expects lower funds for water and wastewater. Typical funding has come as 70% loan and 30% grant.

Lori Beary – SRF – NPS can be achieved in other forms –SRF is used- INHF to purchase land for other agencies to acquire. Brownfields clean up. SRF is loan, so it has to be paid back which can put individuals at a disadvantage as compared to utilities that have ratepayers to repay the loan. \$300 million per year. Clean water – waste and drinking. Smaller communities struggle with repayment requirements. Capitalization grants from EPA are available, anticipate decreasing trend.

Northey – What % do Wastewater plants apply for? Beary - \$300M municipal W/WW compared to \$30M. The problem with NPS is there is no revenue to repay the debt. SW management does not have a mechanism to repay.

Northey – Are there Stormwater Utilities out there? Beary – No. Early beginnings, but not many.

WPAC – Tom Hadden

Highlighted WPAC and their efforts to this point. Asked WRCC members to provide ideas for WPAC could focus efforts on. Highlighted Rathbun Rural Water and their success. WPAC reviewed their efforts to highlight:

Will be working on strategy products to share with both the WRCC and legislature

Desire for WPAC to keep in close touch with WRCC as both groups have similar interests

Looking into efforts for voluntary engagement

Effort has to be local. Effort needs to be on the ground with people knocking on doors, starting discussions, finding out what the interests are.

Develop Message that is consistent and deliver to intended audience.

Identify objectives and goals.

Continuous Improvement.

Hadden highlighted members of the WPAC and what each brings to the table.

Northey summarized differences between WRCC and WPAC through communication, coordination, and developing and understanding with what is going on.

Hadden asked "How do we get people engaged?" A question that has been addressed by WPAC.

Meeting is open to public at 300 East Locust, MWA office.

Rich Sims, NRCS – Missouri River – NRCS and US ACE – developed 8 working groups to address damage from MO flood – multi-state.

1. Ag
2. Flood Plain Management
3. Levee Repair
4. Policies and Regulatory
5. River Management
6. Tribal Groups

Asked for Representative from IDALS to join Ag working group– Groups are multi-state – Indian Affairs – State Ex Dir. FSA - Sims is on Ag working group – crop insurance, real estate, removing debris, how to restore land, in conjunction with 1985 Food security act. Addressing how to handle Farm Bill and future. What falls into compliance and what falls into Clean Water Act. Goal is to ensure that producers don't fall into violation by accident. Working on PR campaign – multi-state basis is in action. USACE – levee repair management, leadership is based association.

Northey = What is role of members Orgs relative to state efforts? – There is a task force, mostly state, including Corps and others. SIMRA = MoRAST – These two groups are involved with individual efforts and are involved in recovery efforts. These efforts may come up, but not what WRCC will be concentrating on. More at longer term quality and less on flood related impacts.

SIMS – Funding opportunities – \$200 million toward natural disasters is currently working its way through Congress in bill– Original language addressed Hurricane Irene and other natural disasters. Through conversation with FSA Whitaker - \$ available for debris removal. Emergency Watershed program – looking at damage, works through easements addressing damage to physical structure, such as bridge – 75% cost share for life threatening primarily. Will be working through IDALS.

Northey – Funding for practices to repair levees is a fraction of what is needed.

Transition

Follow up on previous WRCC efforts

Cedar River Report –

Is there a follow up needed?

How do we collect information for dissemination? Information there, links to information,

Members asked to provide link to targeted web page.

List of projects, ongoing effort, opportunities to be provided by members. Coffelt will provide notes.

Importance of communication identified and reinforced for what efforts of individual organizations are.

Clayton – Task of WRCC includes providing information and education to public. If someone is working on website, can we provide a way for someone to find out what they need to know?

Northey – Idea behind WRCC is to create the coordination of opportunities that exist.

Menner – One stop Shop for what we are looking for.

Memorandum of Understanding

Comments – Coffelt provided brief overview of the document in regard to:

Quality versus quantity?

Formalization of intended purpose? Is this necessary

GIPP (IDNR) – differentiation of Federal Agencies as unofficial advisors. Example of USGS, Kevin Richards.

Coffelt will send a request for suggestions to redraw a draft. No discomfort was voiced from members present. Will achieve a final draft by next meeting.

Upcoming meetings – December 14th, 2011

January 13th, 2012

February 10th 2012

Other – Will work with WPAC for meetings.

Communication on links, add robustness to site.

MOU.

Meeting adjourned at 9:48.

End