IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LEADING IOWANS IN CARING FOR OUR NATURAL RESOURCES
River Restoration Program Update
Iowa DNR

Tim Hall, DNR Hydrology Resources Coordinator

Water Resources Coordinating Council
December 20, 2016
River Restoration Planning
River Restoration Program Updates

Updates to three significant programs:

1. The Iowa Stream Mitigation Method
2. Best Management Practices Toolbox
3. In-Lieu Fee Program for Stream Restoration
What is stream mitigation?

- Required by the Clean Water Act for impacts to Water of the US
- Anyone proposing to impact a stream must:
  1. AVOID
  2. MINIMIZE
  3. MITIGATE
- As a last resort, mitigation can be proposed to offset loss of function.

“No Net Loss of Function or Value.”
How do you determine if the proposed mitigation is sufficient to offset impacts?
Starting Point – The Missouri Method

• The Corps requested that the DNR begin with Missouri Method, and then adapt it to better fit the conditions of Iowa.

• The Missouri Stream Mitigation Method has already been through one revision by the Corps, and represents a process that has been used, and subsequently improved as a result of experience.
What is the Method, and how does it work?

- The method is designed to be a **rapid** assessment of the **relative value** of lost functions and restoration benefits based on predicted effects of proposed activities.
- It is **not** meant to measure the unique functions of each individual stream reach.
- It is a system of “debits” and “credits.”
- To get approval for mitigation the number of credits from restorations must equal or exceed the number of debits from impacts.
Timeline

- **2015**: IDNR modifies Missouri Method in consultation with agencies and experts
- **January 2016**: DRAFT of Iowa Method is shared with broad stakeholder group
- **March - October 2016**: Interagency Review Team monthly meetings
- **Public Comment**
- **Testing**
- **Revisions**
- **2017**: Final adoption by the US Army Corp of Engineers
Current Status – The Iowa Stream Mitigation Method

- The Corps issued this public notice on October 6, 2016.

- Comment period ended December 1, 2016, BUT . . .

- “Due to the necessity of further testing and public input, substantial comments will be accepted until May 01, 2017.”

- Final Iowa Stream Mitigation Method expected to be adopted in June 2017.
For more information:

Documents available on the DNR website:
http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/River-Restoration

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Best Management Practices for Stream Restoration

What should be done to restore streams in Iowa? What practices should be used and where should they be used?
Best Management Practices for Stream Restoration

Right Practices
Right Location
Correct Installation

Preparation of a Best Practices Manual
Best Management Practices for Stream Restoration

Proposals Submitted: October 19, 2016

Evaluated by DNR team.
Decision to award contract to:
Stantec Consulting with LT Leon Assoc.

Contract approved Dec. 8, 2016
Natural Resource Commission and
Environmental Protection Commission
Best Management Practices for Stream Restoration

End Product:

- A Data Input Tool
- A Data Analysis Tool
- A Suite of Standard Practices with typical cross sections and details
Best Management Practices for Stream Restoration

Typical Practices:

• Dam Mitigation
• Grade Control
• Stream Bank Toe Protection/Stabilization
• Bank and Floodplain Restoration
• Channel Definition Structure
• Thalweg Moving Structure
• Aquatic Habitat/Cover Feature
• Geomorphic Channel Design
• Vegetative Restoration
• Riparian Buffering
Best Management Practices for Stream Restoration

Timeline

• Proposals Due – October 19, 2016
• Presentation to EPC – November 15, 2016
• Presentation to NRC – December 8, 2016
• Contract Signed – December 8, 2016
• Project Kick-off meeting – December 9, 2016
• Anticipated Project Execution – 16 months
• BMP Manual Completed – April 2018
Best Management Practices for Stream Restoration

Interagency Advisory Team

• IDALS – Urban Conservation
• NRCS
• Iowa DOT
• County Engineering
• City Engineering
• Iowa State University - Geomorphology
• US Army Corps of Engineers
• Nature Conservancy
• DNR Technical Staff –
  • ESD and CRD
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Federal law allows three approaches to mitigation:

1. **BANK**: The permittee can pay for improvements that have already been constructed elsewhere
2. **IN-LIEU FEE**: The permittee can pay an approved provider to do it
3. **PERMITTEE-RESPONSIBLE MITIGATION**: The permittee does it themselves

Currently in IOWA,

- There are some approved banks for wetlands, but not for streams
- There are no approved ILF programs
- Most mitigation is done by the permittee
- There is no systematic method for determining how much mitigation is necessary
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In-Lieu Fee Program

Objective - to analyze the feasibility for the Iowa DNR to sponsor an in lieu fee program to provide stream mitigation credit services.
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In-Lieu Fee Program

Steps So Far:
• Reviewed Army Corps of Engineers’ permit files to quantify the extent of stream mitigation need in Iowa, and
• Identified major user groups.
• Used that data - working with the Iowa DOT – to built market estimates.
• Worked through analysis of whether sponsoring an ILF program is feasible for Iowa DNR. Internal draft report completed.
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In-Lieu Fee Program

Next Steps:
• Presentation to leadership this month.

Decision about moving forward in whatever manner is in the best interests of the resource, the State of Iowa, and the Department.
Questions??

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