

Water Resources Coordinating Council

Measures of Success Sub-Committee

Friday November 8th, 2013 @ Wallace Building

Meeting Minutes

WRCC Members/Designees Present:

John Lawrence, Shawn Richmond, John Whitaker, Greg Thessen (invited), Jake Hansen, Roger Bruner, Matt Lechtenberg, David Osterberg, Doug Schnoebelen, Jim Gillespie

Public Attendance:

Spencer Parkinson, Sampeth Jayesinbe (sp?), Bill Freeland, Jace Mikels, John Crotty, Linda Kinman, Roger Wolf, Brett Lorenzen, Deb Kozel, Mary Braun, Matt Gronewald, Josh Mandelbaum, Rick Robinson

Meeting convened @ 8:00 AM CST

- Welcome and Introductions made by John Lawrence, Sub-Committee Chair
- Prior meeting minutes reviewed with no additions or corrections noted
- FSA Overview by John Whitaker
 - FSA has two reporting periods for producers
 - Dec. 15th for fall seeded crops and forages
 - July 15th for cover crops, green manure, spring seeded crops
 - Cover crops and green manure are currently lumped together
 - Reports stem back to the 1930's, with cover crops being new question in 2012
 - CRP, buffers, etc are reported in July
 - 95-98% participation on surveys, remainder are mostly under 10 acre farm size
 - State and county level reports possible for aggregate reporting
 - Amount of rye grown for seed is a potential indicator to measure cover crop increases
- NASS Overview by Greg Thessen
 - NASS utilizes farmer surveys, satellite info, and FSA data
 - Data Collection Efforts
 - Ag Resource Management Surveys (ARMs) conducted for ERS
 - Targets a specific crop each time, one crop per report, 4-5 year cycles on targeted crops
 - 300-400 data points
 - State-level reporting only for aggregate info
 - Practices, financial info, tillage
 - 40+ page intensive survey
 - Fertilizer, pesticide use detailed
 - CEAP

- 2012 targeted watersheds survey for Boone and Raccoon watersheds
 - 778 data points for Boone and Raccoon
 - NASS is collection arm
 - Infrequent surveys, but potential to bring back on 5-year rotation
 - Enumerators collect data directly from farmers
 - High cost surveys
 - Useful for practice effectiveness info, but not for statewide trend indicators
 - Greg was asked to find out the cost for a statewide survey of this type
 - May be potential to partner agency resources for surveys
 - Census of Ag
 - Conducted every 5 years, 2012 census underway now with report expected in spring of 2014
 - Some data at watershed level in 2007
 - Self-reported by farmers
 - Noted that watershed formatting of data reporting can be a challenge. Should work now to better accommodate this need in the future.
 - Cropland data layer offers analysis capability
 - Census does not provide interpretive info
- NRCS Overview by Marty Adkins
 - NRCS utilizes a performance results system with conservation plans in ToolKit
 - ProTracts system, aimed at productivity measures primarily for management purposes with workloads, etc...
 - Natural Resources Inventory
 - Goes back to 1977, location based inventory
 - Runs on a 5-year cycle
 - National in scope with some state-level potential
 - 1000's of points across Iowa, collected by NRCS staff
 - NRCS annually reports on C/S practice info
 - IDALS captures similar info for C/S practices, some calculations for soil loss and sediment delivery also available
 - Draft Discussion Handout of Measures and Logic Model handed out
 - General discussion and overview of the draft was given
 - What gaps exist with the list of desired indicators and how can they be augmented in the near or long term?
 - Point source indicators to be added into the list
 - Next Steps
 - Report back to WRCC on inventory of measures and provide outline
 - John Lawrence coordinating a meeting of statisticians to discuss detail level needed for surveys
 - Review GIS capabilities more in depth at next sub-committee meeting

- Public Comments
 - Brett Lorenzen
 - Remote sensing capability is very advanced
 - Ability to assess buffer presence and tillage practices
 - ½ meter resolution photography in Minnesota enables assessment of voluntary practices by comparing to C/S acres in a watershed and subtracting from the total acres of buffers
 - Linda Kinman
 - Need to identify losses as well as gains
 - Need to address who is making land use decisions
 - Need to track privately implemented practices not utilizing C/S
 - Can we reduce duplicate data analysis and collection efforts?
 - Need to target C/S to priority HUC8 watersheds
 - John Crotty
 - Who will define what constitutes success? No timeline has been identified, will this sub-committee do that?
 - Response was provided that the WRCC as a whole would discuss those types of questions and the purpose of the sub-committee is to make recommendations to the WRCC as a whole
 - Roger Wolf
 - Logic model framework is the right direction
 - Opportunity to develop measures of how we do better
 - Empowering people at the local level is the key to success, with local successes being the key to expansion throughout the state
 - Iowa Soybean Association is actively working to engage cooperators
- Meeting adjourned at 10:04 AM CST