

Water Resources Coordinating Council

Thursday February 28th 2013 @ Iowa Dept. of Public Safety

Meeting Minutes

WRCC Members/Designees Present:

Secretary Northey, Julie Vande Hoef, Chuck Gipp, Bill Ehm, Jim Gillespie, Todd Coffelt, Stu Schmitz, John Benson, John Lawrence, Scott Marler, Larry Weber, Jay Mar, Marty Adkins, Josh Svaty, Diane Karnish

Public Attendance:

Gregg Haddish, Shawn Richmond, Clare Lindahl, Jerry Neppel, Ben Gleason, Matt Gronewald, Linda Kinman, Adam Schnieders, Mary Skopec, Allen Bonini, Luis Leon, John Moreland, Dean Lemke, Steve Williams, Steven Cole, Jan Glendening, Eileen Bader, Amy Marquess, John Crotty, John Torbert

Meeting convened @ 9:03 AM CST

- Welcome and Introductions made by Secretary Northey
 - Public comments will be received at end of meeting
 - Call for additional agenda items made. None identified.
- Legislative Efforts
 - Ag Water Quality Initiative budget ask of \$2.4M FY14 and \$4.4M FY15
 - Is included in Governor's budget
 - Budget targets for Ag & Natural Resources announced
 - House target is \$1M increase over last year
 - Senate target is \$25M increase over last year
- WPAC Update
 - Annual WPAC report is in preparation now
 - Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) and priority watersheds are a large focus
 - Pat Boddy facilitated WPAC discussion on NRS
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- Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy Update
 - Strategy documents available for review at <http://www.nutrientstrategy.iastate.edu/>
 - Over 1700 comments were received and are available on website
 - Anticipate final report completion within about a month.
- Point Source Updates
 - DNR has reviewed point source comments and is working on grouping them together by themes
 - Have identified 65 unique comments to focus on responses to
 - Have been talking with EPA, Point Sources, and environmental groups about their comments and concerns
- Nonpoint Source Updates

- IDALS working on comment review for Nonpoint Source comments
- All 1700+ comments will be reviewed and considered
- 22 action items outlined under the nonpoint section
- 12/22 of the items have actions already underway today
- Watershed priorities group outcome will be detailed today
- Several other NRS action item efforts continue to progress such as: Small watershed projects, nutrient research center proposal, 2013 Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards, NRS outreach to ag leadership, CCAs, retailers, farmers.
- NRS N&P practice sheet recently developed as educational tool for CCAs and others
- Practice sheet outlines practices identified in NRS science assessment
- Have received no pushback from farmers about implementing practices and moving forward
- Most farmers have indicated they are already utilizing many practices and looking to incorporate more based on science proven approach
- Science Team Updates
 - Comments have been posted on NRS website
 - Science Team is reviewing comments received on science assessment
 - Two new recent presentations on NRS have been added to website
 - Heartland Program announced recently
 - Mini-grant program focused on NRS practices
 - In priority watersheds
 - Educational/research focus
 - Have been receiving inquiries from ag companies on how to incorporate NRS practices into their plots
 - New technology is a viable business area for companies to explore
- WRCC Discussion on NRS Update
 - CIG grants from NRCS available soon
 - IDALS research & demonstration grants recently announced
 - Urge all WRCC members to coordinate efforts and be on same page
 - \$13.8M for 18 MRBI projects in Iowa now
 - Vilsack pledged an additional \$5.8M
 - NRCS looking into using some of this funding for grants
 - Driftless area initiative for habitat and water quality
 - “Stars are aligning for Iowa”
- Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards
 - Awards are a joint effort of the Governor, Lt. Governor, IDALS, and DNR
 - 2012 was inaugural year of awards where 67 farm families were recognized at Iowa State Fair
 - Call for nominations was announce February 18th
 - Encourage WRCC members and others that work with farmers to nominate a deserving farmer for recognition

- 2013 event will be at Iowa State Fair
- Nomination and other info can be found at <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/environmentalleader.asp>
- Nominations due by June 15th
- Watershed Prioritization Working Group Update
 - Group was tasked with identifying HUC8 watershed priorities
 - Challenging process to address across state and individual priorities across agencies and groups
 - Working group consisted of WRCC representatives from IDALS, DNR, NRCS, and U of I. Also included WPAC representation.
 - WPAC represented as a group by Roger Wolf, and in his stead by Rick Robinson as past Chair and Vice-Chair of WPAC. Todd Suthpin filled in when neither was available and Victoria Carver provided admin support for taking notes to report back to WPAC.
 - Process consisted of reviewing monitoring information for N and P concentrations and loads, major point sources as identified in NRS, and geographic distribution of watersheds across state
 - Eight watersheds were identified by group as proposed priority watersheds.
 - Floyd
 - East & West Nishnabotna
 - North Raccoon
 - Boone
 - South Skunk
 - Skunk
 - Middle Cedar
 - Turkey
 - HUC8 watersheds selected represent areas with high nutrient loads and concentrations, several major point sources, good geographic distribution, and a range of activities within the watersheds.
 - Geographic distribution important to helping these priority areas serve as local information hubs to support larger statewide efforts. Utilized to support demonstrations and technology transfer across state.
 - Point sources within these watersheds that move to adopt biologic nutrient reduction soon will provide early opportunities to pair projects with nonpoint source efforts
 - It was noted that several of these watersheds overlap areas identified as priority concerns for flooding efforts and opportunity will exist for collaborative efforts to address water quality and flooding in these areas
 - HUC8 priority watersheds will serve as focus areas for targeted efforts
 - Follow-up information was provided to show that these 8 watersheds represent 30% of the statewide N load and 36% of the statewide P load
 - WRCC adopted the HUC8 watersheds as proposed by consensus of the group with no concerns raised
- Other Topics

- Requested overview of Nutrient Research Center proposal at next WRCC meeting
- Notice given that the hypoxia Task Force will be meeting in Kentucky April 16-18
- Dean Wintersteen will be discussing working with land grant universities on water quality issues at Hypoxia Task Force meeting
- Karl Brooks speaking at Great Hall in Memorial Union at ISU on March 5th
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- Upcoming Events
 - Iowa Water Conference (Ames)– March 4th – 5th
- Future Meeting Dates
 - Wednesday April 10th @ 9am– MWA Office, 300 E. Locust, Des Moines
- Public Comments
 - Linda Kinman
 - Inquired why groups outside of WRCC were not notified of watershed prioritization working group meetings. Concerned that WMAs, business and industry groups not included.
 - Response was that those groups were included via WPAC representation on working group.
 - Susan Judkins
 - Questioned whether funds in the range of \$10M that existed prior to RIO dissolving were being monitored? Funds had existed at one point targeted towards similar water quality efforts.

Meeting adjourned at 10:48am