



Board Winter Quarterly Meeting

Thursday January 21, 2016

1:30-4:00PM

Ames City Hall, Room 135

Board Members:

Present: Paul Toot, Erv Klaas, Ann Campbell, Tom Foster

Absent: Leah Maass, Sonia Dodd, Suzie Moore, Bob Kindred, David Young, Kevin Griggs, Rachel Cahill, Mark Scott, Mike Nepereny, Randy Baker

Quorum present: No

Others present: Penny Brown Huber, Executive Director Prairie Rivers of Iowa

Hanna Bates, Watershed Coordinator Prairie Rivers of Iowa

Annie Glawe, Natural Resources Educator Prairie Rivers of Iowa

Amy Moorehouse, Graduate Student Iowa State University

Proceedings:

- Meeting called to order at 1:35p.m. by Chair, Paul Toot
- Update from the Natural Resources Educator
 - Glawe presented ongoing work to develop natural resources curriculum to the Squaw Creek Watershed. Work in progress includes: Conservation champion signage, developing a conservation practice model to use at events, coordinating with Story County Conservation on curriculum for local schools, work with the ISU Water and Climate Change Program, and developing service learning projects in conjunction with the conservation practice cost-share program offered by the Prairie Rivers of Iowa Watersheds and Waterways program
 - Campbell inquired about sign development for non-program participants to acknowledge work already being done in the watershed. The program will consider developing signs that are customizable to different farmers in the watershed.

- Board discussion also included developing conservation practice models that can be placed throughout the watershed in different public places, such as City Hall, the public library, and other locations.
- Board discussion also included posting pop-up banners around the watershed in different public places to educate on different conservation practices
- Updates from Penny Brown Huber and Hanna Bates
 - Brown Huber discussed new contributions from the Iowa Corn Growers Association. They are contributing \$800 to be distributed over four field days to defray the costs of holding the events
 - Brown Huber and Bates discussed inquiries for the US Geological Survey and Purdue University to conduct research in the Squaw Creek Watershed. This a qualitative study examining beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes towards conservation in the context of climate change. The conclusions drawn from conversation among board members are that such a study of the watershed is premature. As the Watersheds and Waterways program progresses, we will be more able to allow research entities to conduct studies in the watershed.
- Research and Development Presentation
 - Amy Moorhouse, Iowa State University graduate student in Natural Resource Ecology and Management, presented on Prairie STRIPS. This is a new conservation practice available to farmers and landowners in the watershed. This practice is a combination of contour and filter strips planted strategically in the landscape based on hydrological flow. It takes approximately 10% of fields out of production, but provides disproportionate benefits in comparison to land lost. Benefits include reduced soil loss, reduced N and P loss, and an increase of habitat and wildlife in Iowa landscapes.
 - So far, the practice has been primarily in a pilot phase, but it is moving into the implementation stage with farmers across the State of Iowa.
 - Bates noted that she is exploring farm ground in the watershed to place the practice. This is difficult due to the generally flatness of the farm ground in the watershed. Prairie STRIPS require at least a 4% slope grade to give maximum benefit to the land. Land of that grade is primarily located up in Hamilton County, which does not make up a large portion of the watershed.
- Update by the Watershed Coordinator
 - Bates provided an overview of November-January work in the watershed that included farmer outreach events, conservation planning, and program development
 - Education and outreach activities: Held a field day in Hamilton County with 40 people in attendance; and organized a series of workshops during the month of November featuring land use tools, conservation practices, and water quality monitoring

- For training and development during that time, Bates received a certificate of training from the NRCS in 9-step conservation planning that is conducted by the NRCS offices throughout the State of Iowa
- Farmer outreach activities: Bates attended United Suppliers Sustain training and presented to local agriculture retailers, attended Iowa State University Extension & Outreach Crop Advantage meetings, the Heartland Cooperative Winter Grain Meeting, and the Iowa Corn Farmer to Farmer Panel. At all the events Bates provided informational brochures about Squaw Creek and the Watersheds and Waterways Cost-Share program.
- Bates was also a delegate for the REAP Congress to advocate for soil health and water quality on farm ground across Iowa at the Iowa Capitol in Des Moines, Iowa
- Bates described a new subprogram being offered in conjunction with the cost-share programming available to Squaw Creek. This subprogram provides a free of charge on-field assessment to look for potential conservation practices that could work for farmers and landowners in the watershed. This involves: in-person meeting with farmer/landowner, aerial map analysis, and SWAT and ACPF analysis in GIS. This assessment provides recommendations based on cost-share availability in the Watersheds and Waterways program.
- Bates outlined the plans for water quality monitoring in Squaw Creek and East Indian Creek beginning Spring 2016. Currently, materials and monitors are purchased, sites are scouted and confirmed, and test runs have been conducted to calibrate the software
- Bates described new conservation projects in Boone and Hamilton County and continued work in individual farmer outreach
- Upcoming outreach events for the Watersheds and Waterways Program for Squaw Creek:
 - Practical Farmers of Iowa Conference (Jan. 22-23)
 - Iowa Soybean Association Research Conference (Feb. 16-17)
 - Iowa Water Conference (March 23-24)
- Upcoming local events
 - Lunch & Learn: What do you lose when you lose the soil?
 - March 8 Noon-2PM
 - Stanhope Community Building
 - Meeting on cover crops co-sponsored with Heartland Cooperative
- Adjournment
 - The meeting adjourned at 3:35PM
 - Next meeting scheduled for April 21, 2016 1:30-4PM Ames City Hall

Minutes submitted by Hanna Bates