



Board Spring Quarterly Meeting Thursday, October 12, 2017

4:00-5:30 PM

Ames Public Library, 515 Douglas Avenue, Ames
PEO Public Room

Board Members Present: Jean Eells, Ann Campbell, LeAnne Harter (substitute, Story County), Kevin Griggs, Eryv Klaas

Absent: Mark Scott, Harold Hove, Sonia Dodd

Quorum is met

Also present: Kayla Hasper, Mike Brandrup, Daniel Haug, Penny Brown Huber (Prairie Rivers of Iowa)

PROCEEDINGS

Welcome and Introductions

Jean Eells, Chair

Meeting called to order at 4pm by Chair Jean Eells

Board Members Share Updates on Watershed Initiatives and/or Issues in the area

- ❖ As a roll call, Jean Eells suggested that everyone present share any local water quality and conservation news
 - Jean shared a pamphlet (Choosing your CRP Journey) developed by Women Food and Agriculture Network as a contractor for FSA
 - Tailored for women owners of farmland, it clarifies some confusing differences in CRP paths and has been very popular
 - Early indications that national FSA would pick it up if back cover modified. Squaw Creek could benefit from strategic CRP.
 - Jean said that cover crops have been coming up near her home in the northeast part of the watershed
 - Kevin Griggs said that with early harvest, cover crops look awesome
 - Anne Campbell invited everyone to see the new parking lot at Ames City Hall
 - Demonstration project incorporating pervious pavement and bioretention cells in medians
 - Completely open as of today
 - Videos documenting construction available on Channel 12 and YouTube
 - Mike Brandrup said that water for Hamilton County's new convention center would be supplied by Webster City, but that the county first had to settle for \$61K with Xenia, which did not have

- large enough mains but owned the right to supply Briggs Woods. The same issue could come up with new projects in the Squaw Creek watershed, much of which is in the Xenia service area.
- Kayla Hasper said that the first bioreactor funded by our WQI project in the Squaw Creek Watershed will be installed this fall
 - Erv Klaas noted signs of the dry year
 - No water seeping into his basement, which is unusual after 4 inches of rain
 - Water levels low at Ada Hayden, which Bill Simpkins thinks is fed 80% by groundwater
 - Penny Brown Huber said that Stanhope is having a meeting about a meeting about Source Water Protection
 - Gilbert postponed their SRF project

Review and Approve July 13, 2017 Minutes

Erv moves to approve, Anne seconds, motion carries

Old Business:

- ❖ **Watershed Management Authorities of Iowa Initiative** **Jean**
 - Jean said this was a good idea, but no-one from Squaw Creek WMA would be able to attend the October 18 meeting

- ❖ **Update from Squaw Creek Watershed Coordinator** **Kayla Hasper, PRI**
 - Newsletter for summer/fall has been printed, electronic newsletter updated quarterly.
 - Kayla shared a handout with acres and cost share of practices installed over first three years of WQI project
 - Cover crop acreage increased in Year 3
 - No-till acres are those covered by WQI cost share, and does not reflect more widespread implementation
 - Erv noted that NRCS numbers for Story County are comparable
 - For bioreactors, federal and state funds can be combined to cover 100% of the cost
 - Kayla will be checking up on cover crops this fall
 - Penny said that cover crop goal in WQI grant was unrealistically high. We'll choose more realistic targets in next round.
 - Prairie Rivers will be working on application for a continuation of WQI grant for another 3 years
 - PRI and Story County Conservation completed a series of workshops to certify Master River Stewards (similar to master gardeners)
 - Kayla spoke at Iowa Environmental Council Conference
 - Results from Squaw Creek monitoring station include large spike in *E. coli* on Aug 14, 57,000 MPN/100mL
 - Erv said this not unusual compared to what IOWATER volunteers had observed
 - Gilbert Creek was never that high so effluent from sewage treatment lagoon was unlikely
 - Could it be wildlife?

- Michelle Soupir at ISU has found *E. coli* persisting in river sediment
- DNR has found that source tracking can be difficult. For example, phosphorus levels are above 8mg/L in the creek near the power plant, but hardly noticeable at the mouth due to dilution
- Penny asked what are other WMAs are doing to respond to spikes
 - Leanne said that Fourmile Creek WMA had discussed tackling bacteria in the future
 - Jean said this would be a good question for the WMAs of Iowa

❖ **Update from Watershed Educator**

Dan Haug, PRI

- Since those in attendance were also on Keigley WMA board, Dan noted upcoming listening sessions for Keigley-South Skunk watershed plan on Oct 13 and Oct 30
 - Erv was concerned about promotion of and access for on-campus session
 - Dan said parking in certain lots were free after 5:30, would include map on flier
 - Soil and Water Conservation club would help promote on-campus, press release would be sent to Ames Tribune

❖ **Urban Fringe Grant – NRCS of Iowa**

Mike Brandrup, PRI

- NRCS Conservation Collaboration Grant was awarded, beginning September, to focus on smaller farmers and landowners in Squaw Creek watershed that may be underserved by existing conservation programs
- Mike said the project has identified 232 landowners with <100 acres within 5 miles of Ames
- Field day was rained out, so had talk at Gilbert City Hall.
 - Penny noted that this generated some interesting conversations. One attendee had not considered talking with tenants about their conservation practices. Comments from some landowners that they thought conservation assistance programs were only for corn and bean farmers
- Mike will be working one-on-one with landowners to do some conservation planning
- Mike said he is thinking about how to promote agricultural conservation in areas of development pressure. There may be an opportunity to work with HOAs and realtors
 - Erv said with low impact development, there is a question of who manages the common green spaces. In one state, a small transfer fee on real estate went to a trust that now manages over 1000 acres of prairie

❖ **Continued Discussion of Goals and Objectives**

Penny Brown Huber, PRI

- Penny asked if we can we set concrete deliverables for items discussed at previous meetings so we can either include them in next WQI or apply for other grants
- Empowering watershed stewards would be easy to include in WQI grant extension
- Penny thought wildlife might be more difficult to work into grant
 - Erv said that Tom Rosburg has started floristic study for Story County
 - Dan asked if goal is to assess wildlife in the watershed or to look for opportunities to improve wildlife habitat while meeting water quality goals. Erv said the latter. Erv said he would like to see GAP analysis used to identify conservation opportunities at watershed scale. Talk to Kevin McCane

and Robin McNealy at ISU GIS lab. Need to know what's there and whether it could be enhanced or expanded in ways that fit into conservation programs. Des Moines lobe is low in floristic value. Any additions to prairie and wetland acreage made will be good. Bird watching may be a top recreation opportunity along Squaw Creek.

- Penny said that Story County is working on trails plan, but wondered how we reconcile recreation in Squaw Creek with high *E. coli* numbers
 - Erv clarified that *E. coli* is not worrisome in itself but is an indicator of fecal contamination that could indicate the presence of pathogens like *Cryptosporidium*. He worries about kids playing in creek—there's a rope swing on the creek near the golf course.
 - Squaw Creek's designated use was updated to full-contact recreational after a recreational use assessment and attainability analysis was completed, but it's unclear how that translates into a change in either people's behavior (staying out of the water) or change in the water quality
 - Mike noted that posting signs at beaches doesn't necessarily deter people from swimming

New Business:

❖ Discussion of Board Member Changes for 2018

Jean

- We may have some turnover due to elections and terms ending
- Anne said she is stepping down. She wondered if it would make more sense for Ames to be represented by staff from the water department
- Erv said he may be stepping down at some point but will continue as long as he can

Next Meeting: January 18, 2018, 4-5:30pm. Jean suggested this be held in Stanhope

Adjournment

Motion by Jean Eells to adjourn at 5:10PM

Minutes submitted by Dan Haug