



## **Board Winter Quarterly Meeting Thursday, January 18, 2019**

4:00-5:30 PM

Stanhope Community Center (600 Main Street Stanhope, IA 50246)

**Field Tour:** Pollinator planting in Stanhope city park near one of the three active wellheads. This planting is a high quality seed mix based on a species list supplied by Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge and donated by a local seed company. The group also looked at a city well location on the Northeast corner of town, where the city and Prairie Rivers of Iowa have worked with landowners to implement conservation practices in order to protect the drinking water quality for the city, as well as the surface water quality in the Squaw Creek Watershed.

Board members present: Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen (City of Ames), Jean Eells (Hamilton SWCD), Selden Spencer (Story SWCD), Harold Hove (City of Stanhope), Tanner Scheuermann (Boone County Supervisors)

Also present: Tracy Warner and Liz Calhoun (City of Ames), Laura Merrick (Squaw Creek Watershed Coalition), Doug Gass (ISU Extension), Kayla Bergman and Dan Haug (Prairie Rivers of Iowa)

### **Welcome**

Jean Eells

Board members tested the following samples for nitrate

Rural water (Xenia) north of Slater	4.1 mg/L
Don Williams Lake	4.0 mg/L
Clear Creek in Ames	2.0 mg/L
Tributary of Ballard Creek	1.0 mg/L
South Branch of Worrell Creek by TELC	14.0 mg/L

### **Review and Approve Agenda**

Beatty-Hansen moves to accept the agenda, Hove seconds

### **Review and Approve October 18, 2018 Minutes**

Scheuermann moves to accept the minutes, Spencer seconds

### **Introductions and Board Member Updates**

WMA Board Members

Question: What have you done in your jurisdictional area related to water quality in the last 3-6 months?

- Jean Eells – Nothing new for Hamilton County SWCD.
  - Jean Eells has had conversations with Randy Baker of Stratford. Stratford has some problems with drainage and wet basements that could be addressed by WMA. Eells

suggested that cover crops can improve water infiltration and drainage in the soil where drain tiles haven't worked.

- Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Tracy Warner, and Liz Calhoun
  - In the Capital Improvement Plan, the Ames City Council approved \$200,000/year over five years (double the initial recommendation) that can be put toward urban watershed improvements that have a nutrient reduction component. This came out of a feasibility study and will complement phased upgrades to the Water Pollution Control Facility that will remove nutrients and add capacity.
  - FEMA and DNR held meeting at Ames City Hall on October 17 to share updates to flood insurance maps for Ames and Story County, and there is a GIS portal where you can view changes. Once the federal government reopens there will be an appeals process. Ames will have several appeals where things have changed from 2008 conditions (the timeframe for the data used to prepare the maps) and caught an error where the Squaw Creek Bridge at South Duff was mapped as a culvert—DNR is looking into it.
  - There are ongoing discussions with the State Hygienic Lab about microbial source tracking—tests that could help identify the sources of fecal contamination in Squaw Creek (i.e. livestock, wildlife, human)
  - Ames has applied again for a national FEMA grant. The proposal will lower flood elevations in Squaw Creek at South Duff by 2 feet by modifying the stream channel (a two-stage design). High water velocity at S 5<sup>th</sup> St is safety issue even when low enough to seem driveable. Since the project has some stream restoration and educational components, Prairie Rivers, ISWEP, Iowa Rivers Revival, Squaw Creek Watershed Coalition and several other groups will be partners.
  - Ames is now submitting a full application to IDALS (Iowa Dept of Agriculture and Land Stewardship) for a Water Quality Initiative urban demonstration project. Tree trenches (planter boxes under the sidewalk with an engineered soil) will be installed along Welch Ave to soak up and filter stormwater.
- Selden Spencer—Spencer represented Story SWCD at the Conservation Districts of Iowa day at the state capitol. He had an encouraging conversation about water quality with Representative Rob Bacon, but has not heard whether it will be a priority for the governor.
- Tanner Scheuermann—Boone County and Prairie Rivers did not get the DNR education grant but is looking for other ways to fund watershed signs in the county.
  - Iowa County Conservation Board employees had a quarterly district meeting at Jester Park, where they learned about Polk County's water monitoring efforts. This is partly done by volunteers, partly by staff, and funded by a bond issue. In the wake of cuts to DNR's IOWATER program, this program can be a model for other conservation boards.
  - Beaver Creek WMA (which includes Greene, Dallas, Guthrie, and Polk counties) is working on a watershed plan. Scheuermann attended one of the planning meetings.
- Harold Hove—Hove had some conversations with the former owner of some land that's been a concern for wellhead protection and is trying to track down who owns it now.
  - Stanhope is working to get cost figures for reattaching a sewer line.
- Doug Gass, ISU Extension—Gass was hired in November as a watershed implementation coordinator for the South Skunk (HUC-8) watershed, focusing on Squaw Creek Watershed. He has IDALS funding to work with farmers to install more edge-of-field practices (wetlands,

bioreactors, and saturated buffers). He is an extension biologist based out of the ISU campus at East Hall. He has experience with Pheasants Forever and a SWCD in central Illinois.

- Laura Merrick, attending as interested citizen and active member of Squaw Creek Watershed Coalition. Merrick reported on a recent meeting to discuss the future of the coalition, also attended by several WMA board members. It was decided that there was still a need for and interest in volunteer monitoring. Merrick also has an ongoing monitoring project in an urbanizing sub-watershed of Worrell Creek, in partnership with Story County Conservation.

### **New Business:**

- Prairie Rivers of Iowa Grant Updates Kayla Bergman, PRI
  - Applying for
    - Iowa Partners in Conservation Grant (2)
      - This is an NRCS statewide grant (formerly known as Conservation Collaboration Grant) for 5-year projects to fund boots on the ground, with a secondary educational piece.
      - PRI is partnering with Pathfinders RC&D of Fairfield on a proposal to coordinate our efforts in the South Skunk River Watershed with their efforts in the lower Skunk River Watershed. It will add education and outreach to existing implementation projects where these are missing.
      - PRI will submit a proposal to hire a staff person to support Hamilton County SWCD with conservation practices in the South Skunk River watershed.
    - McKnight Foundation
      - McKnight is a Minnesota-based foundation associated with the 3M Company. It is one of few national foundations that fund water quality projects. PRI met a representative at the One Water Conference and has been building a relationship.
      - Penny Brown-Huber is working on a proposal (due Feb 1) to do some implementation of conservation practices in the Headwaters of the South Skunk River Watershed
  - Applied for
    - National Association of Conservation Districts
      - This will extend PRI's small landowner project from Squaw Creek Watershed to all of Story County
    - FEMA project (partnering on City of Ames' grant)
      - As mentioned earlier, the city's flood control project includes some education and outreach by PRI and other non-profits
  - Received
    - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
      - PRI received the contract today. Bergman will take on a new role as watershed coordinator for three HUC-12 watersheds (Long Dick Creek, West Indian Creek, Worrel Creek) to promote and implement practices that improve water quality and wildlife habitat. She will spend one day a week in Story SWCD office to help with their administrative workload.

**Old Business:**

- Water Quality Initiative Project Jean Eells
  - The IDALS grant that has been funding Prairie Rivers to do education and technical assistance in the Squaw Creek Watershed will end in March 2019 and will not be renewed. The WMA board and PRI will continue to seek other ways to implement the 20-year watershed management plan.
- Election of officers Jean Eells
  - The position of Vice-Chair is vacant, since Linda Murken will be replacing Rick Sanders as the board representative from the Story County Supervisors. Eells nominated Selden Spencer as Vice Chair, and he was approved unanimously.
- Memorandum of Understanding Jean Eells
  - Eells shared a draft memorandum of understanding between the SCWMA and Prairie Rivers of Iowa. The idea is that if PRI writes grants on behalf of the board (as they have been doing for several years) they will be given the work. Board members had no objections to the content and it was signed by Eells and Spencer.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourns at 5:32.

**Next Meeting:** April 18, 2019 – Boone SWCD hosting

Eells suggested a field trip to a saturated buffer near Ellsworth for the September meeting.