



Loway Creek Watershed Management Authority Board MINUTES

**DMACC Boone Campus, 1125 Hancock Dr, Boone
Thursday, April 21, 2022 – 4:00-5:30 p.m.**

In attendance

Board members: Selden Spencer (Story SWCD), Tim Gartin (Ames), Jeff Schroeder (Stanhope), Steve Carlson (Boone SWCD)

Alternates: Tracy Peterson (Ames), Sara Carmichael (Story County Supervisors)

Guests: Kyle Ament, Neil Weiss, Dan Haug, Jessica Butters, Jeremy Johannsen, Rick Dietz, Laura Merrick

Welcome – Review and Approve Agenda

Selden Spencer, chair, called the meeting to order. Selden Spencer approved agenda, Jeff Schroeder seconded.

Review and Approve Minutes (January 20, 2022)

Selden Spencer approved agenda, Jeff Schroeder seconded.

Board Member Updates

Story SWCD: Selden Spencer reported on a field day that the SWCD sponsored. Mentioned SWCD's involvement in edge-of-field project, to be discussed later in agenda.

City of Stanhope: Nothing new at Stanhope, but Jeff, his colleague Tim Bergin, and Dan Haug (Prairie Rivers of Iowa) have scouted a location at Montgomery Creek to take a DMACC biology class for water monitoring.

Boone SWCD: Steve Carlson and Jeremy Johannsen reported that Boone SWCD approved 5-year soil conservation plan. They are planning a field day which could be held in Loway or Beaver Creek watersheds. They are identifying locations for filter strips that could be funded through CRP (10 year contract up to \$300/acre/year) and will be sending out letters. Also doing outreach on prairie strips: one project is being planted in the watershed which could be available for future field days. Boone SWCD hired an intern.

Story County: Sara Carmichael (subbing for Linda Murken) reported that the Headwaters of the South Skunk River watershed management plan is in progress and going well. Adam Ruppe of JEO is now leading the project. Selden asked about amendments to the 28E agreements (to change the name and add Hamilton County). Sara said that Leanne Harter will work on 28E agreements for both WMAs.

City of Ames: Tracy Peterson reported that she and Dan Haug gave a presentation to the city council on watershed projects and water monitoring.

The flood mitigation project at South Duff will be planted soon. The seed mix includes forbs to provide for threatened pollinators. Prairie Rivers of Iowa is helping the city to convene a task force to improve pollinator habitat. A stream restoration project on Loway Creek between 6th and 13th St will realign the creek into the park to reduce erosion on outer bend that threatens property and infrastructure. DNR has been involved in plans to improve fish habitat, and the design was revised in response to feedback from neighbors. Recent public meetings have been much more positive.

Neil Weiss reported that prairie will be planted along loway Creek at Moore Memorial Park.

Ames and Story County are working on a wetland project west of Gilbert. Ducks Unlimited and IDALS are helping with design and funding. It will be involve pumping of water from drainage ditch into wetland. JEO is doing engineering and constructed is going out for bid to be built in summer and fall.

An RFP for phase one of capital improvements at the Ames Water Pollution Control Facility is due the first week of May. The second phase will include advanced nitrogen and phosphorus removal as required by the nutrient reduction strategy. Wastewater treatment plants have traditionally been required to treat for biological oxygen demand and ammonia but not nutrients.

New Business:

Election of Officers

Selden Spencer reminded everyone that his term will come to end in June and that we will need to elect a new chair at the July meeting. [Note, this meeting was canceled]

Old Business:

Discussion of projects and priorities for 2022

Looking for some direction for the WMA, Selden Spencer invited guests to report on what other WMAs are doing, and a potential project.

Presentation on Story County edge-of-field project

Sara Carmichael, watershed coordinator for Story County, was invited to talk about on a project to batch-and-build multiple saturated buffers and bioreactors.

Polk County has been successful in streamlining design and construction of edge-of-field practices by acting as the fiscal agent and doing the engineering and construction in bulk. John Swanson, the watershed coordinator for Polk County, reached out to expand the project into neighboring counties in 2021.

City of Ames is the fiscal agent, Story County is reaching out to landowners with help of the SWCD and Heartland Coop. IDALS is providing most of funding, but a \$1000 incentive payment is being provided to landowners by the City of Ames (for sites upstream of wastewater treatment plant) or Story County (for sites on East Indian Creek). This year 5 landowners have agreed to best management practices (5 saturated buffers and 7 bioreactors) treating 23 tile outlets. Installation will be in late summer in fall before tile work. These practices are installed within 30 feet of the stream in existing buffers—usually in CRP.

Next year, have identified 50 locations to do tile surveys if landowner says yes. Survey will determine feasibility of these practices.

Could this be done in loway Creek watershed? Maybe. The project continues to expand.

Neil Weiss said that the Beaver Creek watershed coordinator is working on this in Boone County.

Dan Haug said that tile outlets along loway Creek were mapped as part of a RASCAL (Rapid Assessment of Stream Conditions Along Length) survey and could be used for initial screening.

Presentation on activities of other WMAs in Iowa

Kyle Ament, Iowa DNR, is the point person (basin coordinator) for Watershed Management Authorities and watershed projects in central Iowa, including Skunk River. He was invited to talk about what other Watershed Management Authorities in Iowa are doing.

Beaver Creek WMA was awarded an EPA farmer-farmer grant, focusing on soil health, edge of field practices, and floodplain restoration. They hired a watershed coordinator (Laura James, housed out of Boone NRCS office) and will be hiring a soil health advisor.

Boone River WMA finished a watershed plan, is installing creek signs. Received a Fish and Wildlife Service grant to identify and mitigate barriers to fish passage: mitigation of two perched culverts on Eagle Creek and Prairie Creek in Wright County, with county match.

The Iowa Watershed Approach (a big project funded by a HUD disaster relief grant) is wrapping up after 5 years. Over 300 practices installed to address flooding (and also water quality) and involved 9 WMAs.

Fourmile Creek is working on edge of field practices and structural practices to address nutrients and flooding.

Many WMAs are working on watershed plans.

Some are using American Rescue Plan funds for water quality projects.

A few have pooled funds from member jurisdictions to hire a watershed coordinator, but the WMA itself rarely holds money, and the coordinator is usually housed with one of the member cities or SWCDs.

Most have focused on nutrients. Few have addressed E. coli, although nutrient management plans for manure can address both nutrients and bacteria.

Kyle is available as a sounding board for grant proposals and can help facilitate collaboration.

Discussion of funding options.

A joint funding formula had been proposed by Rick Sanders a few years ago, but never went anywhere.

Dan Haug explained that Prairie Rivers of Iowa had applied for and managed the state grant that funded previous work in loway Creek watershed, with the WMA providing some in-kind match and a letter of support. PRI could write more grants on behalf of WMA but is concerned that the resulting projects often require a competitive bid and we may not get reimbursed for our efforts if successful. There is a lot of activity happening in our area on water quality and flood control, but much of it is focused on other watersheds or taking place on a city or county basis.

Discussion of consolidating loway Creek and Headwaters WMAs: this has been proposed before and rejected over concerns about quorum, but since several projects encompass both loway Creek and HSSR, there would be benefits to holding joint meetings.

Opportunities for Guests to Update WMA Members

Laura Merrick gave a recap of efforts to date on microbial source tracking—which could help determine if E. coli is of human origin or animal. Laura is pursuing a Master's in Public Health at University of Iowa and may have an opportunity to work with State Hygienic Lab as part of her research.

Tracy Peterson suggested caffeine as another tracer that would indicate human sources of bacteria.

Laura Merrick reminded the group that the spelling of a tributary should be corrected from Worle Creek to Worrell Creek. This is how it appears in official sources and historic documents.

Adjournment

Selden Spencer moved to adjourn, Jeff Schroeder seconded.