

WATERSHED QUALITY PLANNING TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY
September 27, 2007

Committee Members Attendance	Representing
Jim Boyt	Iowa Association of Business and Industry
William Ehm	IDNR
Wayne Gieselman	Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
Tom Hadden	Growing Green Communities
Elizabeth Hamilton	Iowa Corn Grower's Association
Linda Kinman	Iowa Environmental Council
Rep. Donovan Olson	House Representative
Emily Piper	Iowa Rural Water Association
Rick Robinson	Iowa Farm Bureau
Deb Ryun	Conservation Districts of Iowa
Jeff Schnell	Iowa Pork Producers Association
Roger Wolf	Iowa Soybean Association

Guest Attendance	Representing
Marty Adkins	USDA-NRCS
Noreen Bush	House GOP Caucus Staff
Geri Crawford	MWA
Susan Fenton	IA Dept. of Agriculture
Zeke Furlong	House Democratic Staff
Mary Gillaspey	MWA
Brad Horchen	US, EPA – Kansas City
George Hunt	HDR
Deb Kozel	LSA
Jace Mikels	Senate Democratic Caucus Staff
Jerry Neppel	IDALS/DSC
Lew Olson	House Rep. Caucus Staff
Duane Sand	Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Neila Seaman	Sierra Club

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The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. at Metro Waste Authority (300 E. Locust Street, Ste. 100, Des Moines, Iowa). Introductions were made. Reports were distributed and presented by each subcommittee and discussion was held on the recommendations for the final report.

Key result areas (recommendations) for the final legislative report were identified and prioritized with consensus of the committee.

Report No. 1:

Legislative Charges: Improving and sustaining water quality (a); Facilitate implementation of existing programs (c)

Recommendations were broken down into three key areas; coordination, strategy, and funding issues.

Coordination Recommendation: What came out of the subcommittee discussions is a water resource management concept. The focus would primarily be on prioritizing watersheds, looking at programming and funding and target those funds to the priority areas. The authority would be given to the Governor's office with the primary responsibility to develop the structure and involve all State and Federal agencies in the state of Iowa to have some sort of funding or program for land and water use activities. Much discussion was held around public participation. Citizens who have an interest in land and water management would be encouraged to attend and participate on the Water Resource Coordinating Council (WRCC). All participants are to be representatives of the highest level within their agency who have the authority to make decisions for the agency they represent. It was recommended by the subcommittee that individuals from the following agencies would serve on the WRCC council.

- Governor or designee, chairperson;
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources;
- Iowa Department of Agricultural and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation;
- Iowa Department of Public Health;
- Iowa Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management;
- Iowa Secretary of Agriculture;
- U.S. Geological Survey-Iowa Office;
- U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- Iowa State University College of Agriculture;
- University of Iowa;
- University of Northern Iowa; and,
- U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

Examples of what the council will review and include in their discussions about managing water resources in Iowa and water resource programs and funding include:

- A complete statewide watershed assessment and planning process, which will include an interim (12-31-08) and a long term comprehensive State Water Plan (12-31-09), with ongoing updates every 5 years;
- A protocol for identifying high priority watersheds and sub-watersheds for targeting resources;
- Best available technology to prioritize where citizen and funding investment will improve and protect water quality within individual sub-watersheds;

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- Voluntary performance based standards;
- Protocol for assigning multi-agency watershed and sub-watershed teams to coordinate citizen and agency activities within a watershed.

Overall this concept will help Iowa utilize their dollars most effectively.

Strategy Recommendation A: A social marketing campaign to be undertaken by public agencies and other organizations to create a conservation ethic in all Iowans was recommended. The goal is for Iowans to take a personal responsibility for water quality. A statewide social shift needs to occur with the assumption that everybody is responsible and everybody needs to be part of the solution.

Surveys showed that people don't understand the problems with water quality. There have been a number of questionnaires indicating people in Iowa think that farm chemicals in the water is the primary problem. Surveys also showed people are very interested in clean water. The recommended campaign concept is "Clean Water" – Everyone is Responsible and Benefits. Marketing strategies would need to be developed and a buy-in from state agencies, non-profits, and others to help move this strategy forward. In the next legislative year a budget should be established for \$1 million for the first year of development. The WRCC would be responsible for development and implementation of the social marketing campaign recommendation.

Strategy Recommendation B: The IDNR is currently developing draft criteria for prioritization of surface waters. The subcommittee supports this process but there is no legislative action at this time. It is recommended that the IDNR seek input from a broad range of people for reviewing the criteria. Impaired waters should be included in the criteria for prioritizing waterbodies. Organizations and agencies should be encouraged to adopt these priorities for use in their watershed or sub-watershed and water quality work. The prioritization of surface waters should be implemented through the WRCC for discussion and comment.

Funding Recommendation: Pilot Sub-Watershed Funding Project - In order for them to be successful they need to show a physical connection to a nearby city. Sources of funds include general obligation bonds which would be preferred, although cities do not have enough general obligation bonding capacity to finance projects outside the existing city corporation boundaries. Revenue bonds are another option, but these revenues cannot be used unless the city has taxing authority over those in the watershed. There are concerns about adequate representation. Other options include the use of sub-districts as defined by 161A.13 in Iowa Code or 28-E agreements. No matter the authority or structure, there are also questions about the long-term success of meeting existing or expected water quality standards. The task force recommends a pilot sub-watershed project to demonstrate whether these current statutes and programs can be synchronized or modified to maximize limited resources to achieve multiple objectives. The recommended budget for planning and implementation of one pilot sub-watershed project's highest priorities is \$5 million.

In summary the entire group discussion on this particular recommendation was whatever structure the subcommittee came up with for watersheds, it appears we can virtually do everything we want to do already. However, there are some barriers not completely defined that are standing in the way of moving some things forward. The intent of this recommendation is to basically consider removing the barriers entirely, or at the same time discover what those barriers truly are and either solve them as we go or at least bring them forward not knowing what we need to do.

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Report No. 2:

Legislative Charges: Creating economic incentives for compliance (b); Providing incentives for the development of pollution control quantification protocols and procedures (d)

The subcommittee met five times and developed the recommendations listed in the draft subcommittee report which was distributed. Presentations were given during subcommittee meetings on various levels of topics pertaining to their legislative charge. The following are recommendations coming forth from the subcommittee:

Assessment and Planning Recommendation: The need for better assessments and planning was identified. The subcommittee did not get into specifics on the exact funding sources that are currently being used for assessments and planning. There were discussions about the need for assessments at the HUC 8 level that could direct us to problems of smaller sub-watersheds within the HUC 8 areas. There are approximately 56 HUC 8 watersheds in the state. If a good assessment has been completed it could lead us to other types of projects dealing with specific problems identified from that assessment. From those specific projects a plan based on the original assessment could be put together and then funding sought. The subcommittee determined that if watershed projects are well planned and put together generally funding can be found.

Issues and challenges regarding on-site septic systems and unsewered communities were discussed at length. Based on input given from presenters the need to develop a “gap analysis” to determine the financial and technical needs of communities that are not currently being met was identified.

Affordable, alternative wastewater treatment technologies specific to small unsewered communities should continue to be explored, analyzed, approved, and their use expanded.

The DNR should lead an effort to identify and prioritize those unsewered communities that present the greatest health risks.

Iowa should develop a “Time of Transfer” requirement that on-site septic systems are inspected at the time of transfer of ownership of property, and the septic tank be pumped out at the time of the sale if it has not been pumped out within the previous year.

Iowa should require planning and oversight of future residential development that otherwise wouldn't be a DNR permitted activity. Prior to a plat receiving approval from a city or county for development, the developer should present a wastewater treatment and disposal plan to the county board of health or the city for approval.

Access to Available Programs and Resources Recommendation: Watershed groups have many resources available to them for assessment, planning, and implementation of watershed projects. These resources, however, are widely unknown to the majority of people, organizations, cities, and others within the state. A matrix of programs and incentives needs to be developed for communities and cities as well as rural landowners and others who may find it difficult to understand the alternatives available to them for improving and protecting water quality at their level of involvement. Such a matrix should take the form of a kiosk set within a web-based program that would satisfy inquiries about both programs as well as practices. Emphasis should be placed on making the matrix easily accessible and understandable; and links to more information from the department should be user friendly.

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City Drinking Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Infrastructure Needs Recommendation: Cities are experiencing overwhelming costs for replacement of aging infrastructure and compliance with current and future standards for both drinking water and wastewater treatment utilities. Additional money and resources should be made available to address these needs.

An unsewered community wastewater financial assistance program should be created that provides grants and low-interest loans for unsewered communities with existing water quality issues.

The wastewater treatment financial assistance fund should be revised to provide more funding and to expand eligibility.

Strategic Conservation Easements Recommendation: Develop and fund a program to utilize key, targeted land conservation easements within all watersheds to retire fragile land that contributes significantly to water quality problems. Special attention should be placed upon connecting corridors along rivers and streams that would provide benefits for recreation and wildlife as well as water quality protection. Iowa's goal should be to establish buffers, with and without permanent easements, along all 70,000+ miles of streams within the state. Water quality benefits should be considered a priority for the state in land acquisitions.

State Revolving Loan Fund Recommendation: DNR and the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) have made many important improvements in the administration of the clean water State Revolving Fund (SRF) by making funding available to many potential users. Those improvements are beginning to have a positive impact on Iowa watersheds. DNR and IFA should continue to make loan funds available and to aggressively market SRF loans. In addition, both agencies should continue to monitor the fund to be certain that adequate loan resources are available into the future and should be prepared to make recommendations to the Legislature should funding prove to be inadequate.

Iowa Drainage Districts Recommendation: The Iowa and national emphasis on renewable energy will require that the State's landscape continue to be as productive as possible to supply both feed for livestock and fuel for energy. Cropland must be adequately drained for efficient production and much of the drainage infrastructure will need to be updated in the coming years. The Iowa Code should require drainage districts to consider the water quality they discharge while improving their drainage infrastructure. Such non-traditional approaches might include wetland mitigation, nitrate reducing wetlands, controlled drainage, bio-reactors, and cover crops that will improve the quality and environmental impact of drainage water entering Iowa streams.

It was noted that the word "require" should be changed to authorize and encourage in the sentence beginning as - The Iowa Code should...

Information and Education for the General Public Recommendation: Iowan's must be made aware of the connection of watershed activities and resultant water quality issues in such a way that they can grasp individual relevance and responsibility.

IOWATER and the Iowa Master Conservationist Program should be expanded and linked to provide information and education to landowners, farm operators, and non-farm rural residents about "stream health". Such material would include information about the impact of gullies, stream bank and streambed erosion and deposition issues, feedlot runoff, and excess nutrients on stream biotic health.

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The Iowa DOT and counties should place signs that bear the name streams at crossings and watershed boundaries along all of the State's paved roads.

Local watershed information should be made available on kiosks in public areas such as rest stops, state parks and beaches, and public boat ramps.

Credit for Reaching Water Quality Goals Recommendation: Participants in projects of priority watersheds should receive financial bonuses in excess of normal cost-share from sources other than the project sponsors based upon their collective success in meeting previously identified, minimum pollutant reduction goals. Such goals could be based upon either monitoring or modeling.

Pollutant Trading Recommendation: The fundamental necessity of pollutant trading is a regulated point source and the regulatory authority must require a reduction in the discharge of a specific pollutant. Trading allows the discharger to "purchase" pollutant reductions from other point or nonpoint source dischargers such that water quality standards can be met. To this point in time, DNR has found that Iowa's water quality standards lend themselves only to point source-to-point source trades. The Department of Natural Resources will be improving water quality standards in the coming years to address excess nutrients that impact the recreational and aquatic life uses of the State's lakes and streams. In order to meet nutrient standards point sources and permitted dischargers in nutrient impaired watersheds will be required to significantly reduce phosphorus and nitrogen in their effluent. These new standards may bring about the desire and ability for regulated point sources to purchase pollutant reductions from nonpoint sources. Iowa should position itself to be able to utilize pollutant trading to provide a sustainable and cost-effective strategy for improving Iowa's water quality.

Encourage DNR NPDES permitting staff to continue to allow pollutant trading between point sources.

DNR should continue to study and evaluate the issue of pollutant trading between point sources and nonpoint sources and explore the viability of a system for trading nutrient loads between point and nonpoint sources in order to achieve the targets of a TMDL or NPDES permit. Included in any study and evaluation should be an analysis of any necessary authorizing language.

There are no recommendations to provide to the legislature at this time. In the meantime, we need to continue to study pollutant trading and understand what is happening in other states. At the appropriate time there may be opportunities for this type of trading and we need to be prepared for it.

Watershed Management Entities Recommendation: This recommendation has not been completely flushed out by the subcommittee. Questions raised during subcommittee sessions were: What is that entity? If we are going to do HUC 8 assessments who's going to be the receiver of that assessment? What entity out there is going to take that assessment and do something with it? One area of discussion was subdistricts already contained in Iowa Code. In other subcommittee sessions 28E agreements that some watershed groups are using was discussed.

Recommendation by subcommittee: Expand the use of subdistricts, as defined in 161A.13 of the Code of Iowa, for purposes of watershed improvement by:

- Expanding the scope from agricultural lands to include all land;
- Making available to landowners within the subdistrict funds for approved conservation practices derived from subdistrict taxes;

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- Excluding from subdistrict taxes, those parcels of land where an environmental management system that meets certain minimum criteria is being fully implemented.

Funding Recommendation: It was determined that this particular recommendation should be addressed in some form, and more discussion would be required.

The following options could be explored by the Legislature as possibilities for funding sources to support watershed assessment, planning, and implementation:

- Combine a sales tax on bottled drinking water with the existing sales tax on drinking water. Any new revenue from such taxes would be dedicated to watershed projects.
- Increase registration fees for canoes and kayaks and allocate money for specific lake and river watershed improvement efforts.
- Appropriation from Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund to be used for replacement of aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

Conservation Design Recommendation: State agencies should set a strong example of leadership by designing and retrofitting all buildings, grounds, parks, and preserves in such a way as to maximize water quality benefits. In addition, any entity that accepts state funding should be required to follow the same guidelines.

Report No. 3:

Legislative Charge (e): Providing greater flexibility through community-based, non-regulatory and performance-driven watershed management.

State Level Regional Watershed Assessment Support Tool Recommendation

The state should support publishing and updating periodically a Regional Watershed Assessment (RWA) assistance program at HUC 8 scale. There are approximately 56 (HUC 8) size watershed units delineated in Iowa. A goal might be to do 11 per year for 5 years (or some combination thereof) to eventually cover entire state. A review and update cycle should be built in. A standard RWA provides an inventory of resources that would be GIS based, including but not limited to land use, soil, slopes, management practices currently in use, stream condition, resource status. A standard RWA would provide local watershed groups with common information they could use as they develop locally specific community-based watershed implementation plans. Estimated cost is \$100,000 – \$300,000 per 8 digit HUC or \$5-10 million. Such an effort could be leveraged with federal funds.

Community-Based, Performance-Driven Pilot Demonstration Program Recommendation

Key Results Area 1, up to four RWA areas should be selected and additional support provided for development of watershed infrastructure demonstrations. This would include forming cooperative service agreements at the HUC 8 level. Support should be provided to communities (including municipalities, regulated community and property owners/operators) to develop and support model Cooperative Community-based Watershed Agreements. These agreements would exist at the HUC 8 level with the purpose of additional planning and implementation targeted at the HUC 12 level. Such CCWA agreements could be based on the use of a 28E model. Inter-local agreements in Iowa are governed by Chapter 28E of the Iowa statutes. The 28E model provides a mechanism to structure working arrangements, financial and reporting requirements and would strengthen existing and future collaboration between local, state and federal government agencies, as well as public and private collaborators. As part of the agreement process, state and federal agencies and local communities would be encouraged to experiment and test innovative ways of achieving watershed water

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management performance gains. Existing state and federal agencies should give priority to these pilot watersheds, providing support for HUC 12 watershed plan development and also allowing experimental and flexible use of their existing program authority. For example, the state should request the existing oversight committees for IDNR and IDALS to enable adjustments to their existing programs in support of CCWA demonstrations, including greater flexibility needed to meet watershed resource goals. Implementation of management strategies will take place in HUC 12 sub-watersheds, to include watershed monitoring and measurement (see Key Results Area 3) designed to provide feedback data for measuring performance and making adjustments to the watershed plan. A bi-annual progress report should be provided to the legislature to learn from these demonstrations. Partial funding for such programs might come from IDALS Financial Incentive Funds and Water Protection Funds and IDNR Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program and Water Monitoring Program, to name a few.

Watershed Monitoring and Measurement for Planning and Performance Recommendation

In addition to current support for water monitoring, the state should provide additional support for locally-based Watershed Monitoring and Measurement. This monitoring would be custom designed to provide information on essential water resource questions facing the local community. Local communities would first be able to use this information to support enhanced planning; helping them identify priority areas to target and determine what information is missing. Secondly, data collected over time would provide the local watershed community with feedback on the short-term and long-term effectiveness of management solutions, empowering them with site-specific information upon which to make improvements to their action plan. Such information is a key to identifying workable, cost effective solutions, while also providing a method for documenting performance gains. This monitoring would be targeted to small sub-basins where changes are detectable in a reasonable time frame and results can be used to encourage changes in practices and overall management. The state should share in the funding needed to deploy this kind of monitoring and should encourage local communities to cost share, as well.

Public Information Campaign Defining and Promoting Expectations Recommendation

The state should take the lead in coordinating development of a Watershed Water Quality Public Information Campaign that defines what performance means in terms that are clear to stakeholders. The message should be introduced to the public in an appealing and understandable way. One of the challenges to overcome is the divide between technical explanations, acronyms, numbers and the message that reaches the public. This campaign should create a mechanism to translate technical data into meaningful messages for the general public and a forum in which to relay the information. It should be charged with developing a clear vocabulary for describing all elements pertaining to watershed problems and solutions. Basic questions should be answered, such as: What is a watershed? What is a watershed plan? Why is it important to have a watershed plan based on adaptive management principles in my watershed? Why does it take so long to see watershed water quality improvements? Acronyms and methods of planning, monitoring and measuring performance should be described. Economic development opportunities and new technologies offering both point source and non-point source mitigation options should be described. The complexity and long-term nature of the problems, discovery of solutions, and implementation and measurement of performing solutions should be clearly explained. The public and policy makers should be provided with both big picture and site-specific information in order to know whether they need to take action in their watershed and, if so, how to proceed. Representatives of stakeholder groups experienced in the various phases of community and performance-based watershed work in Iowa should be involved in developing and vetting the campaign, with the help of public relations and communications experts.

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Open Discussion/Suggestions

1. Process suggestion: When the government accountability office does an analysis of an existing program they give the agencies involved a chance to comment and verify what changes those agencies are willing to make on their own additional resources. The suggestion was made to include this step into the process before recommendations are made to the legislature.
2. None of the reports specifically used the word “groundwater” as part of the recommendations. Suggestion was to include the word “groundwater” in the final legislative report.
3. Program combinations need to be revisited (Deb Ryun).
4. Prioritization issue: Request one list everyone can work off of rather than working off six or more different subset lists. Figure out how to create one list and prioritize within that list to direct funding.
5. Consider stormwater management and the opportunities that all levels of government, various agencies and entities have that could greatly impact the process. This item was discussed in subcommittee No. 1 meetings early on, but did not survive the process partly due to regulatory issues. Suggestion was to include verbiage: “all levels of government, entities and agencies” in Subcommittee No. 2’s Recommendation - Conservation Design (item #13 of the subcommittee report).
6. Sub-watershed Pilot Project - one of the purposes of the pilot project was to try to navigate the watershed improvement structure that already exists. There was no discussion on what happens afterwards or those lessons learned. It was the intent of subcommittee No. 1 that this discussion should continue. Instead of having a committee that meets every three or four year’s to come up with recommendations – it should be looked at as an ongoing process.
7. Watershed Assessment and Planning: We should not be funding projects that have not gone through the prescribed process to assess and monitor the plan.
8. Unsewered Communities: Currently the DNR is strongly pushing toward establishing a responsible management entity to deal with on-site septic systems and unsewered communities. Some sort of management entity needs to be responsible for a formalized managed system.
9. State Revolving Fund (SRF) – What are the problems in terms of water quality improvements? The overriding issue is money, and where are we going to get more money. Stress proper planning; staff to provide assistance; the practice itself; and the monitoring.
10. Iowa had late summer and early fall rains in certain counties - there are some good stories about how the infrastructure really worked, where the structures held the water and sediment. Suggestion was to include recognition of those positive stories in the final legislative report.
11. Representative Donovan Olson suggested that some explicit mention of sustainability be included in the final recommendations.

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12. The following key elements should be included in the final written report.

- (Rep. Donovan Olson) Prepare a “purpose statement” that is very clear for each recommendation as they will end up being drafted in the legislation – The biggest concern is for the purpose statements to reflect the intent of this body.
- (Rep. Donovan Olson) Include the legislative charges in the final report.
- (Rep. Donovan Olson) It would be useful to include dollar amounts/funding in the final report.
 - (Emily Piper) Refer to subcommittee No. 2 report (#12. Funding). i.e. sales tax on bottled water; increasing registration fees for canoes and kayaks; allocate money for specific lake and river watershed improvement efforts; rebuild Iowa infrastructure fund from appropriations to be used for replacement of aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. We could coordinate the various recommendations for funding and use some of those revenues.
 - (Deb Ryun) Our charge was really not to look at funding although there are probably some funding issues we feel strongly about. Do we include funding or the dollar amount in the final report?
 - (Rep. Donovan Olson) There are some coordination activities that are currently going on where it's obvious that more money is required. It would be useless for us to make these recommendations and then not include that there is a need for more funding. This needs to be addressed and it's useful and important to identify a dollar amount if we have an idea of what that would be.
 - In the report use the words “user fee” instead of the word “tax”.

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Recommendations for Final Legislative Report

Key Result Area A: Coordination - The Water Resource Coordinating Council (WRCC)

This water resource management concept provides a common aim to develop an integrated approach to water resource management, which recognizes the insufficiency of current approaches, programs, practices, funding and utilization of current funding programs. This approach seeks to overcome old polarities such as quantity versus quality, land versus water, the chemical versus the physical and biological, supply versus demand, political versus hydrological, and point versus non-point. This approach seeks to manage water comprehensively rather than compartmentally.

Sub-watershed considerations necessary to address in the planning, managing and implementation of water resource improvement and protection:

- 1) Maximizing participation among many diverse sub-watershed stakeholders;
- 2) Improved water resource information availability and management;
- 3) Incentives and recognition for environmental excellence; and,
- 4) Identification of measurable improvements to water quality in Iowa.

A. The citizens of Iowa entrust the State's water resources infrastructure with the Governor, as Chief Executive Officer of the State of Iowa, and therefore charge the Governor with the primary responsibility to recognize the assets and challenges; and to preserve and protect Iowa's water resources. It is also the responsibility of the Legislature, duly elected by the citizens of the State of Iowa, to empower, and fund all state agencies and institutions to ensure their full access to ability of programs and practices that improve, preserve and protect all water resources. The Governor and the Legislature recognize that all Iowa citizens have the responsibility to be involved in locally-led sub-watershed initiatives that enhance and protect our water resources.

The governor may assign a staff person as the representative of the Office of the Governor, for the purpose of convening the council at least quarterly. The purpose of the council is for ongoing, regular coordination of water resource protection strategies, planning, assessment, prioritization, review, concurrence, advocacy, and education and oversight functions of the Water Resources Coordinating Council. This group shall operate by consensus.

B. The Water Resource Coordinating Council (WRCC) will include the following representatives:

- 1) Governor or designee, chairperson;
- 2) Iowa Department of Natural Resources;
- 3) Iowa Department of Agricultural and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation;
- 4) Iowa Department of Public Health;
- 5) Iowa Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management;
- 6) Iowa Secretary of Agriculture;
- 7) U.S. Geological Survey-Iowa Office;
- 8) U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- 9) Iowa State University College of Agriculture;
- 10) University of Iowa;
- 11) University of Northern Iowa; and,
- 12) U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

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Public Participation - Other public and private organizations and agencies, businesses, citizen groups and nonprofits that have an interest in land and water management are encouraged to attend and participate. All meetings will be public and an agenda will be posted in advance.

All participants are to be representative of the highest level within their agency, with the authority to make decisions and commitments for the agency they represent.

- C. The council is charged by the Governor to oversee Iowa's water resources in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner, consistent with the legislative charge of the Watershed Quality Planning Task Force, 2006-2007.

Managing Iowa's water resources and water resource programs and funding to ensure coordination and prioritization of programs and funding, and eliminating redundancies to ensure water quality improvement and protection. Examples of what the council will review include:

- 1) A complete statewide watershed assessment and planning process, which will include an interim (12-31-08) and a long term comprehensive State Water Plan (12-31-09), with ongoing updates every 5 years;
- 2) A protocol for identifying high priority watersheds and sub-watersheds for targeting resources;
- 3) Best available technology to prioritize where citizen and funding investment will improve and protect water quality within individual sub-watersheds;
- 4) Voluntary performance based standards;
- 5) Protocol for assigning multi-agency watershed and sub-watershed teams to coordinate citizen and agency activities within a watershed.

Action Items

- Consensus was to include the following additional agencies as representatives of the WRCC:
 1. Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT);
 2. Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED);
 3. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
 4. Farm Service Agency (FSA);
 5. USDA Rural Development;
 6. Include others as deemed necessary.
- The purpose of the WRCC council needs to be strengthened. A purpose statement of what the WRCC objectives are should be expanded. Refer to subcommittee No. 1 report, page 1, item A, second paragraph.
- It was recommended that the following statement should be included, "It will be the responsibility of the Governor to add or eliminate State and Federal agencies as appropriate".

Committee Comments

(Linda Kinman) The initial intent was to bring programs and funding together to have a coordinated effort and to target those funds within the watershed to make good use of those dollars. The intent to

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involve citizens was more from the accountability standpoint that citizens who have an interest and concern will also attend the WRCC meetings.

(Emily Piper) Clarified that the intent of the WRCC coordinating council is not to be making legislative recommendations but simply to take a look at the existing programs and funding streams, and establish a common set of protocol everyone is willing to work under.

(Rick Robinson) Simplified Emily's comment further calling it (public transparent discussion on the agencies – they still have their own charges, their own budget, their own responsibilities).

Key Result Area B: – Social Marketing Campaign

- A. Social Marketing Campaign - The sub-committee also recommends a social marketing campaign be undertaken by public agencies and other organizations to create a conservation ethic in all Iowans. Surveys show that people don't understand the problems with water quality but indicate Iowans desire improvement. They don't know how they can be a part of the solution. The desired outcome is for Iowans to take personal responsibility for water quality. Citizens must understand the needs of their sub-watersheds and have the tools available to lead change in local pilot projects. The recommended concept is, "Clean Water - Everyone Is Responsible and Benefits." It is recommended that money should be allocated by the Iowa Legislature to fund a major outreach campaign to help shift attitudes. The WRCC should be responsible for development and implementation of this recommendation. The recommended budget is \$1 million for year one development. Additional funds for long-term implementation will be necessary.
- B. Information and Education for the General Public - Iowan's must be made aware of the connection of watershed activities and resultant water quality issues in such a way that they can grasp individual relevance and responsibility.
 - o IOWATER and the Iowa Master Conservationist Program should be expanded and linked to provide information and education to landowners, farm operators, and non-farm rural residents about "stream health". Such material would include information about the impact of gullies, stream bank and streambed erosion and deposition issues, feedlot runoff, and excess nutrients on stream biotic health.
 - o The Iowa DOT and counties should place signs that bear the name streams at crossings and watershed boundaries along all of the State's paved roads.
 - o Local watershed information should be made available on kiosks in public areas such as rest stops, state parks and beaches, and public boat ramps.
- C. Public Information Campaign Defining and Promoting Expectations - The state should take the lead in coordinating development of a Watershed Water Quality Public Information Campaign that defines what performance means in terms that are clear to stakeholders. The message should be introduced to the public in an appealing and understandable way. One of the challenges to overcome is the divide between technical explanations, acronyms, numbers and the message that reaches the public. This campaign should create a mechanism to translate technical data into meaningful messages for the general public and a forum in which to relay the information. It should be charged with developing a clear vocabulary for describing all elements pertaining to watershed problems and solutions. Basic questions should be answered, such as: What is a watershed? What is a watershed plan? Why is it important to have a watershed plan based on adaptive management principles in my watershed? Why does it take so long to see watershed water quality improvements? Acronyms and methods of planning, monitoring and measuring performance

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should be described. Economic development opportunities and new technologies offering both point source and non-point source mitigation options should be described. The complexity and long-term nature of the problems, discovery of solutions, and implementation and measurement of performing solutions should be clearly explained. The public and policy makers should be provided with both big picture and site-specific information in order to know whether they need to take action in their watershed and, if so, how to proceed. Representatives of stakeholder groups experienced in the various phases of community- and performance-based watershed work in Iowa should be involved in developing and vetting the campaign, with the help of public relations and communications experts.

Action Items

- Consensus was to combine language from the following three subcommittee reports under the Social Marketing Campaign Recommendation.
 1. Include in final report language from subcommittee No. 1 report, item (A) - Social Marketing Campaign, (refer to above verbiage (A));
 2. Include in final report language from subcommittee No. 2 report, item #8 – Information and Education for the General Public, (refer to above verbiage (B));
 3. Include in final report language from subcommittee No. 3 report, Key Result Area #4 – Public Information Campaign Defining and Promoting Expectations, (refer to above verbiage (C)).

- Verbiage also to be included in this recommendation: “The WRCC should be responsible for the development and implementation of this recommendation”.

- It was recommended that a more clear purpose statement should be added to this recommendation.

Committee Comments

(Emily Piper) Water quality and water resource development is an economic development issue, should we tie that in more with the recommendation?

(Deb Ryun) What about the \$1 million dollar budget recommendation, is this reasonable? The committee consensus was to move forward with the recommended \$1 million budget for one year development.

(Roger Wolf) There should be a recognition campaign as part of the “Social Marketing Campaign”, recognizing the good things that are occurring in the state. We have 60 + years of watershed history in Iowa and we should celebrate that fact and how Iowa is moving forward in the next generation. There should be a retrospective look back at how Iowa has attempted to look at the watershed issues.

(Linda Kinman) We do want to caution that we don't want it to appear as though everything is completed, ready and perfect. There are still issues out there and people need to be aware of them.

(Deb Ryun) Let's have the PR experts help us get where we need to be in relation to the campaign, conduct the focus groups, and determine what those key words are to help shift attitudes.

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Key Result Area C: – Watershed Assessment and Planning

- A. Watershed Assessment and Planning - Well planned projects of a manageable scope rarely go unfunded. Priority watersheds should be recruited and provided more resources for planning at the watershed level. Currently, funding and technical assistance is provided to local watershed groups for planning at the HUC 12 level (25-50,000A). Properly prepared watershed plans offer a “roadmap” for success to local watershed leaders. A watershed plan should include objectives, a thorough assessment of the physical, social, and financial resources of the watershed, an analysis of the alternatives, and an implementation plan that includes an evaluation process to measure results. Additional resources (including technical staff, water quality monitoring, and modeling) for broad-based assessment of larger HUC 8 watersheds is necessary to match local dollars to determine which smaller, interior subwatersheds might provide the best opportunities for targeted water quality improvements. For example, Rathbun has completed a detailed assessment of its 350,000+ acres watershed and in the process identified many smaller, manageable subwatersheds within the larger basin where water quality work is being performed.
- B. Funding - The following options could be explored by the Legislature as possibilities for funding sources to support watershed assessment, planning, and implementation:
- Combine a sales tax on bottled drinking water with the existing sales tax on drinking water. Any new revenue from such taxes would be dedicated to watershed projects.
 - Increase registration fees for canoes and kayaks and allocate money for specific lake and river watershed improvement efforts.
 - Appropriation from Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund to be used for replacement of aging drinking water and wastewater infrastructure
- C. State Level Regional Watershed Assessment Support Tool - The state should support publishing and updating periodically a Regional Watershed Assessment (RWA) assistance program at HUC 8 scale. There are approximately 56 (HUC 8) size watershed units delineated in Iowa. A goal might be to do 11 per year for 5 years (or some combination thereof) to eventually cover entire state. A review and update cycle should be built in. A standard RWA provides an inventory of resources that would be GIS based, including but not limited to land use, soil, slopes, management practices currently in use, stream condition, and resource status. A standard RWA would provide local watershed groups with common information they could use as they develop locally specific community-based watershed implementation plans. Estimated cost is \$100,000 – \$300,000 per 8 digit HUC or \$5-10 million. Such an effort could be leveraged with federal funds.

Action Items

A: HUC 8 Scale

- Include some type of verbiage in final report such, as “the Watershed Task Force Committee would like to direct the State of Iowa to do an assessment on the HUC 8 level”. Also include verbiage that the WRCC is to coordinate that process.
- Consensus was the estimated \$5 to \$10 million dollars needed is reasonable.
- Include in final report verbiage from subcommittee No. 2 report, item #1 - Watershed Planning and Assessment, and item #12 – Funding, (refer to above verbiage A and B).

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- Include in final report verbiage from subcommittee No. 3 report, Key Result Area #1, explaining the goal to do 11 assessments per year for five years, (refer to above verbiage (C).

B: HUC 12 Scale

- Regarding sub-watersheds include verbiage – “The WRCC coordinates to make sure the process and resources are available”.
- Communities should take ownership and have a stake in the outcome of the plan.
- Reward those who take initiative and invest in improving their watershed.

Committee Comments

(Deb Ryun) What do we need to get this job done?

- Does a fulltime person need to be hired to do the assessment to gather and organize the data collection?
- How do we determine what data is missing?
- Is additional data collection needed?
- One problem is that we don't have qualified watershed planners in the field. There's a huge disconnect between what needs to be done and how to get the job done.

(Emily Piper) Question was raised to Marty of what he is finding as watershed assessments are being done. Is adequate information being found to complete the preliminary assessment at the HUC 8 level?

(Marty) Two key elements are important to remember. Part of it is data collection, gathering readily available information, organizing that information, and doing something with it. The other important piece is talking with the local people. Gathering local public input and interest and getting an idea of what the local funding capacities are.

- There needs to be public participation to find out what citizens are concerned with.
- The other piece that's missing as far as public participation is education.
- Could there be some kind of cooperation from the agencies to do data collection at the HUC 8 scale? Does the WRCC figure this out?
- If we agree that the State needs to do the assessment, then who will be doing it, what is a reasonable time frame for them to do it, and what kind of money is needed to get it done?
- How is the HUC 8 evaluation going to compare to the 303 D list? Within the 303 D list there are levels of priorities. The State needs to set its priorities.
- Brad Horchen will check on discussions held at the last legislative sessions with EPA region seven about the 303 D list and prioritization.

The scope of the assessment is important. If we go into an assessment focusing only on nutrients, etc. we will end up missing important opportunities both in terms of solving other problems and miss funding opportunities. We need to look at conducting an assessment considering nonpoint source pollution, flash flooding, and other kinds of objectives within that assessment. This would allow us the opportunity while solving one set of problems to do it smart enough to where we're solving a whole new set of problems too without spending more money.

Clarification was given that planning and assessments will be handled separately.

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What is a reasonable time frame to accomplish the HUC 8 rapid assessment and what is the reasonable expectation of what it would cost on an annual basis? It was clarified that a five-year plan would be aggressive and it would take a lot of resources.

Sub-watersheds:

(Emily Piper) Stress to the legislature that if the plan itself is not well done the quality will never be achieved.

(Deb Ryun) Is there something that could be changed in the current language that says dollars can be used for planning and implementation? Or do we need additional dollars?

(Emily Piper) In the short-term would it make sense to redirect some of the dollars that are being used for implementation to planning so we get the right plan?

(Roger Wolf) Local communities should have ownership and have a stake in the outcome of the plan.

(Tom Hadden) When people don't have money invested, they don't care about the outcome and expect someone else to do it. Reward those who take an initiative.

Suggestion was made that at the HUC 12 level do demonstrations of a few pilot projects (not the whole state) to figure out the process and create a protocol. Communities must then demonstrate they have an interest to improve their watershed, and provide local funds or provisions. We would only focus on those who want to participate. At the HUC 8 level we do everything and want a baseline. But at the HUC 12 level we look for those who want to have community ownership.

(Emily Piper) The protocol is out there, the DNR, DSC, and NRCS jointly adopted the planning process. However there are some issues with the resources to get the plan done. It would be good to model as to community involvement with a governance structure for the HUC 8 and HUC 12 analysis where somebody actually receives it and takes responsibility. Also have a follow-up plan for operations and maintenance and rehab as the project ages. Consider increasing the planning dollars to meet the needs of those who understand the need to improve their watershed, and use the four or five pilot projects as a model for others.

Key Result Area D: – Community-Based Performance-Driven Pilot Demonstration Program

A. Community-Based Performance-Driven Pilot Demonstration Programs - From Key Results Area 1 (of report No. 3), up to four RWA areas should be selected and additional support provided for development of watershed infrastructure demonstrations. This would include forming cooperative service agreements at the HUC 8 level. Support should be provided to communities (including municipalities, regulated community and property owners/operators) to develop and support model Cooperative Community-based Watershed Agreements (CCWA). These agreements would exist at the HUC 8 level with the purpose of additional planning and implementation targeted at the HUC 12 level. Such CCWA agreements could be based on the use of a 28E model. Inter-local agreements in Iowa are governed by Chapter 28E of the Iowa statutes. The 28E model provides a mechanism to structure working arrangements, financial and reporting requirements and would strengthen existing and future collaboration between local, state and federal government agencies, as well as public and private collaborators. As part of the agreement process, state and federal agencies and local communities would be encouraged to experiment and test innovative ways of

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achieving watershed water management performance gains. Existing state and federal agencies should give priority to these pilot watersheds, providing support for HUC 12 watershed plan development and also allowing experimental and flexible use of their existing program authority. For example, the state should request the existing oversight committees for IDNR and IDALS to enable adjustments to their existing programs in support of CCWA demonstrations, including greater flexibility needed to meet watershed resource goals. Implementation of management strategies will take place in HUC 12 sub-watersheds, to include watershed monitoring and measurement (see Key Results Area 3 of Report No. 3) designed to provide feedback data for measuring performance and making adjustments to the watershed plan. A bi-annual progress report should be provided to the legislature to learn from these demonstrations. Partial funding for such programs might come from IDALS Financial Incentive Funds and Water Protection Funds and IDNR Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program and Water Monitoring Program, to name a few.

Action Items

- Include verbiage from subcommittee No. 3, Key Result Area #2 – Community-Based Performance-Driven Pilot Demonstration Program, (refer to above verbiage (A));
- Define the purpose and outcome for this recommendation.
- Community-based watershed agreements are to be reviewed by the WRCC.

Key Result Area E: – Watershed Monitoring and Measurement for Planning and Performance

A. Watershed Monitoring and Measurement for Planning and Performance - In addition to current support for water monitoring, the state should provide additional support for locally-based Watershed Monitoring and Measurement. This monitoring would be custom designed to provide information on essential water resource questions facing the local community. Local communities would first be able to use this information to support enhanced planning; helping them identify priority areas to target and determine what information is missing. Secondly, data collected over time would provide the local watershed community with feedback on the short term and long term effectiveness of management solutions, empowering them with site-specific information upon which to make improvements to their action plan. Such information is a key to identifying workable, cost effective solutions, while also providing a method for documenting performance gains. This monitoring would be targeted to small sub-basins where changes are detectable in a reasonable time frame and results can be used to encourage changes in practices and overall management. The state should share in the funding needed to deploy this kind of monitoring and should encourage local communities to cost share, as well.

Action Items

- Include verbiage from subcommittee No. 3, Key Result Area #3 – Watershed Monitoring and Measurement for Planning and Performance, (refer to above verbiage (A))
- Establish coordination with some local investments. This needs to be captured.

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Key Result Area F: – Infrastructure Needs

- A. On-site Septic Systems and Unsewered Communities: Unsewered communities (incorporated and unincorporated) challenge the State's ability to meet water quality standards and meet goals for watershed plans.
- DED, DNR, and cities should develop a "gap analysis" to determine the financial and technical needs of communities. There are several federal and state funding sources, but there may still be gaps due to the limited nature of the grant funds and the cost of financing. The problem extends beyond unsewered communities to any city facing water quality requirements. For example, combined sewer overflow (CSO) separation projects will cost older cities tens of millions of dollars, upwards of hundreds of millions. The State should be prepared to offer a grant program if the gap analysis determines that such a need exists.
 - Affordable, alternative wastewater treatment technologies specific to small unsewered communities need to continue to be explored, analyzed, approved, and their use expanded.
 - DNR should lead an effort to identify and prioritize those unsewered communities that present the greatest health risks.
 - Iowa should develop a "Time of Transfer" requirement that on-site septic systems be inspected at the time of transfer of ownership of property and that the septic tank be pumped out at the time of the sale, if it has not been pumped out within the previous year.
 - Iowa should require planning and oversight of future residential development that otherwise wouldn't be a DNR permitted activity. For instance, prior to a plat receiving approval from a city or county for development – the developer should present a wastewater treatment and disposal plan to the county board of health or the city for approval.
- B. City Drinking Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Infrastructure Needs - Cities are experiencing overwhelming costs for replacement of aging infrastructure and compliance with current and future standards for both drinking water and wastewater treatment utilities. Additional money and resources should be made available to address these needs.
- An unsewered community wastewater financial assistance program should be created that provides grants and low-interest loans for unsewered communities with existing water quality issues.
 - Revise the wastewater treatment financial assistance fund to provide more funding and to expand eligibility.
- C. Strategic Conservation Easements - Develop and fund a program to utilize key, targeted land conservation easements within all watersheds to retire fragile land that contributes significantly to water quality problems. Special attention should be placed upon connecting corridors along rivers and streams that would provide benefits for recreation and wildlife as well as water quality protection. Iowa's goal should be to establish buffers, with and without permanent easements, along all 70,000+ miles of streams within the state. Water quality benefits should be considered a priority for the state in land acquisitions.
- D. Iowa Drainage Districts - The Iowa and national emphasis on renewable energy will require that the State's landscape continue to be as productive as possible to supply both feed for livestock and fuel for energy. Cropland must be adequately drained for efficient production and much of the drainage infrastructure will need to be updated in the coming years. The Iowa Code should require

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drainage districts to consider the water quality they discharge while improving their drainage infrastructure. Such non-traditional approaches might include wetland mitigation, nitrate reducing wetlands, controlled drainage, bio-reactors, and cover crops that will improve the quality and environmental impact of drainage water entering Iowa streams.

Action Items

- It was noted that the word “require” should be changed to authorize and encourage in the sentence beginning as - The Iowa Code should... (refer to item D above – Iowa Drainage Districts).

- Include verbiage from subcommittee No. 2 report, item #2 – On-Site Septic Systems and Unsewered Communities; and item #4 – City Drinking Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Infrastructure Needs, (refer to above verbiage (A and B)).

- Combine item #5 and item #7 verbiage from subcommittee No. 2 report – Strategic Conservation Easements (refer to above verbiage C), and Iowa Drainage Districts (refer to above verbiage D).

Committee Comments

(Linda Kinman) We don't want to lose the idea that infrastructure is needed for drinking water and waste water as it's part of the overall assessment.

(Tom Hadden) Include verbiage to improve unsewered communities, address funding, and give recommendations. Include what possibilities there are to improve existing ones or possibilities of pollutant trading.

(Roger Wolf) You get more bang for the buck with customized targeted design buffer systems. This would be a good pilot project.

(Deb Ryun) Include bonuses for connectivity.

(Emily Piper) What verbiage are we going to use? “Targeted conservation easement for water resource goals”?

Other Items of Discussion

(Jeff Schnell) We tend to focus on what we are trying to fix but there are many success stories that we need to meld into this process and include in the final report.

(Emily Piper) All we are really talking about is cleaning up problems and that is certainly how all our programs are geared, but unfortunately what gets lost are those people who are trying to prevent something from happening but have limited resources. There needs to be a better balance between cleaning up versus helping people who are willing to do some things to stop the problems from ever happening. Suggestion was to include a statement of better balance. Emily is to draft that statement and forward it to Tom, Deb, and Geri.

Tom Hadden distributed a report on state water management programs that are in place in other states that deal with point and nonpoint source pollution.

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Next Steps:

Committee chairs will meet on Monday, October 15, to begin drafting the final report. The meeting will be held at Metro Waste Authority located at (300 E. Locust Street, Ste. 100, Des Moines) from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Committee members are welcomed to send suggestions of what to include in the draft report. Please send those suggestions to Geri by October 12.

The legislative draft report will be forwarded to full committee for comments in October and then reviewed again during the November 5, full Task Force Committee meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Next Meeting

Date:

Monday, November 5, 2007

Time:

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location:

Metro Waste Authority
300 E. Locust Street
Des Moines, Iowa
515-224-0021