

Clean Water Starts with Us

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2
New DNR watershed improvement staff join effort
- 3
Research effort will improve customer service; IOWATER offers monitoring training; Dates to Remember; Share your success stories
- 4
Contract changes aim to make reporting easier
- 5
Register for SWIM 2008 workshop at Springbrook; Rule changes to provide funding for publicly owned lakes
- 6
LiDAR coverage continues to expand across state

WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT IN IOWA

DNR ♦ DSC ♦ NRCS

SPRING 2008

Welcome to our first issue

One of the things that stood out in our recent customer research (see page 3 for a full story) was that you wanted to hear more about grants, technical assistance and other watershed issues.

Clean Water Starts With Us is a quarterly electronic newsletter put together by the Iowa

Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The newsletter is meant to relay information about applying for grants, assistance

available to applicants and watershed projects, new tools and more. It's also a place for you to share your successes and learn from other projects.

If you have story ideas, questions or your own success story to share, e-mail editor Jess Brown at Jessie.Brown@dnr.iowa.gov.

Get the project assistance you need

A wealth of assistance, including new staff, is available for watershed projects. If you have a Section 319, WPF or WSPF grant, you can receive technical and other support from DNR, DSC and NRCS.

Regional coordinators

The three DSC regional coordinators (RCs) work with watershed projects on assessments, grant applications and Watershed Development and Planning Assistance Grants. The RCs also help develop projects and can answer day-to-day questions from projects.

Project officers

The DNR's two new project officers work with the projects and regional coordinators on project

planning, development and oversight, and contracts. The project officers also serve as a contact with EPA and can answer questions on eligibility for 319 funds.

Project guidance

Once you have a grant, regional coordinators and project officers can help guide you through the steps of getting the project rolling.

Technical support

The partner agencies can also help with watershed assessments, including stream, gully, land cover, livestock and more. Projects can borrow tools, like handheld GIS units and tablet computers for the field, for use in assessments. Another available tool, the Sediment Delivery Calculator, can help projects determine results from practices.

Projects can receive advice on selection and design of conservation practices, as well as help

with cost-share and funding assistance issues.

I&E support

Help with information and education (I&E) efforts extends beyond the *I&E Guidebook* to assistance from a DNR Information Specialist in planning, reviewing communications materials and answering day-to-day questions about your I&E efforts.

Assessment and development

Look in the summer newsletter for more information on assistance available with watershed assessments and project development and planning, including how DSC field representatives can help.

For more information on available assistance, contact your DSC regional coordinator or DNR project officer (see page 5 for contacts), or visit the new "Resources for Project Coordinators" page on the DNR website at <http://watershed.iowadnr.gov/coord.html>.

Tools are available for field assessments.



Learn more about watershed grants on the web:

<http://watershed.iowadnr.gov> or www.iowaagriculture.gov/soilConservation.asp

New DNR watershed improvement staff join effort



STEVE HOPKINS joined the DNR Watershed Improvement staff in May 2007 as coordinator of the Section 319 program, which oversees watershed improvement projects across the state along with the DNR's partners. Steve has worked with the DNR since 2000, serving as supervisor of the Water Supply Operations Section and in the onsite wastewater program. He previously worked as Jasper County Sanitarian, coordinator of the Trout Run Watershed Project, coordinator of Iowa State University Extension's Farm 2000 Project and operated a family dairy farm. Steve has a B.A. from Luther College and an M. S. in Land Resources from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



KYLE AMENT moved to the watershed improvement section from the DNR's Air Quality Bureau in November 2007. Kyle is the Section 319 project officer for the northern half of the state. He will be a primary 319 contact for new and existing watershed improvement projects in northern Iowa. Kyle graduated from Iowa State University in 2000, with a B.S. in Animal Ecology/Fisheries Management. Before working for the DNR, Kyle worked at the Palo Alto Soil and Water Conservation District and as a limnologist at the University of Iowa Hygienic Lab.



RACHEL GLAZA joined the Watershed Improvement Section as a Project Officer for Section 319 in November 2007. As the Section 319 project officer for southern Iowa, she works with all aspects associated with Section 319 funded projects. She earned her B.S. in Environmental Sciences from Iowa State University. She joined the DNR in July 2004 interning for the Animal Feeding Operations section, assisting geologists and completing in-house assessments of open feedlots. She later accepted a position with the Wastewater Section, writing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits before transferring to the Watershed Improvement Section.



MINDY BUYCK joined the Watershed Improvement Section in November 2007. Her responsibilities include watershed and water quality modeling, and developing watershed improvement plans (aka TMDLs). Mindy earned a B.S. in Geology and an M.S. in Hydrogeology from Illinois State University. Before coming to the DNR, Mindy was working on a Ph.D. at Iowa State University as a co-major in Geology and Environmental Sciences, researching the effects of perennial vegetation in the removal of nitrate under riparian buffers.



JASON PALMER is a Natural Resource Biologist, working as a project leader in the Watershed Improvement Program's Stressor Identification team. The team attempts to identify and address problems in a watershed that are stressing the bugs and fish that live in the stream. He attended Iowa State University, where he received a bachelor's degree in fisheries and aquatic science and a master's degree in environmental science/water resources. In his off time, Jason enjoys canoeing, camping and fishing.



CHARLES IKENBERRY joined the Watershed Improvement Section in January. His responsibilities include watershed and water quality modeling and developing watershed improvement plans (aka TMDLs). Charles has a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Nebraska, and an M.S. in Biological & Agricultural Engineering from Kansas State. Before coming to the DNR, Charles worked as a water resource consultant for seven years, specializing in stormwater and floodplain management, and design and implementation of water quality Best Management Practices.



JEN KURTH is a Natural Resources Biologist working on stressor identification and writing Water Quality Improvement Plans (aka TMDLs). She has a B.A. in theatre and a B.S. in biology from the University of Minnesota and a M.S. in ecology and environmental science from the University of Maine. Jen works on streams that are listed as impaired for aquatic life use (fish, bugs, and/or mussels) but the cause of the impairment is unknown. She analyzes the data to determine the likely cause(s) and then write the TMDL if needed. "I like to think of it as a sort of environmental CSI," Jen says.

Research effort will improve customer service

This winter, the DNR Watershed Improvement Program embarked on a research effort to learn more about its customers – you – and how to better serve them.

Vernon Research of Cedar Rapids conducted a phone survey and four focus groups to learn about current and potential customers.

The research looked at what types of tools and services customers value when applying for grants and in watershed projects.

The DNR, together with DSC and NRCS, is working on improvements to better serve our customers' needs based on these findings.

As a result of this research, you'll see changes like this newsletter. This is a response to finding that people may not receive all the information they need, whether it's on grant applications or not being aware of support resources, like technical assistance.

The partners are also considering

more long-term changes to programs, including areas like reporting requirements, staffing and how projects are selected. Watch this newsletter for updates and highlights of future changes as they develop.

If you have questions about the research effort, please contact Jess Brown at (515) 281-5131 or Allen Bonini at (515) 281-5107.

IOWATER offers monitoring training

IOWATER, Iowa's statewide volunteer water quality monitoring program, will host workshops throughout the state this summer.

During the two-day workshops, classroom instruction will be combined with hands-on training as participants learn how to monitor and assess the quality of their local streams, rivers and lakes.

A variety of session settings, indoors and outdoors, will contain topics such as starting a monitoring plan, the "why-to" and "how-to" of water monitoring, what to do with the data, networking with others in your area concerned with water quality, and some muddy fun!

All Level One workshops are based on 10 hours of training, set-up

comfortably over two days. The first workshop is April 4 and 5, with the last workshop in late September.

IOWATER emphasizes a perspective based on the watershed. Water quality monitoring includes physical, chemical, biological, and habitat assessments. If they choose, volunteers may submit data to an online database via the IOWATER website, www.iowater.net. Anyone can view data submitted by volunteers, but only certified IOWATER volunteers can enter data.

Visit www.iowater.net for more information on workshop hours, locations, fees and registration. Questions can also be directed to Jackie Gautsch at (319) 335-1761 or Jackie.Gautsch@dnr.iowa.gov.

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 27:

WIRB review meeting

April 1:

319/WPF/WSPF applications due

April 2:

Project Coordinators meeting, Neal Smith Learning Center, Prairie City

April 15:

Quarterly reports due; monthly reports due

Watershed development and planning assistance grant applications due

May 1:

FY 2009 workplans and budgets due

May 15:

Monthly reports due

June 15:

Monthly reports due

June 20:

SWIM workshop registration ends

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORIES

Maybe it's the landowner who dodged your calls for months but now is installing miles of buffers. Maybe it's how you gathered dozens



of locals together at the lake for a cleanup day and field tour. Maybe it's how a unique practice in your watershed has dramatically reduced soil reaching a stream. Or that you finally got the local paper to cover the story.

Whatever your success story, large or small, this newsletter is the place to share it.

Sharing your successes can help spark ideas for other watershed coordinators to use in their own projects,

as well as inspire groups looking to start their own watershed efforts.

Success can spread, and it's all about the final result - a better project and cleaner water for Iowa.

Submit your success stories by writing a few short paragraphs about the success and send them to Jess Brown at Jessie.Brown@dnr.iowa.gov. To be considered for the summer 2008 issue, please have submissions sent by June 2.

Contract changes aim to make reporting easier

Project coordinators should enjoy a number of changes to contract and reporting requirements for those with contracts through DSC and DNR. The changes are designed to make the reporting process more efficient and easier for projects, with more changes underway. Reporting changes include:

Contract Time Frames

- DNR/DSC contracts are now written to cover the entire time period of the Section 319 grant award and for the full amount available, instead of annual contracts.
- One contract will be developed between DNR and DSC to cover the entire timeline shown in the original project application.
- Unless the project is extending or another grant is applied for and awarded to the same project, this will be the only DNR/DSC agreement with the project.

Budget Time Frame

- All funding sources will now operate on the same time frame – WPF, WSPF and Section 319 will provide funding from July 1 to June 30 of each year (state fiscal year).
- Annual workplans and budgets are due to DSC by May 1 for the next fiscal year, unless otherwise noted.

Annual Review Meetings

- Shall be moved to May and June, prior to the end of the appropriate fiscal year.
- All funding periods now end June 30.

Monthly Reports

Projects should now submit monthly reports electronically. These reports include only the Administrative Spreadsheet (Monthly Financial Statements) and are due the 15th of the following month. Monthly narratives are no longer required.

Projects should include a cover page signed by the preparer and the District Chair. This document should be scanned and submitted electronically.

Quarterly Reports

Quarterly reports should also be submitted electronically. Three quarterly reports are required; the fourth quarter will be included in the annual report, not as a separate report.

Reports are to be accompanied by a cover page signed by the preparer and the District Chair. This document should be scanned and submitted electronically.

Deadlines of quarterly reports:

Oct. 15: Reporting period July – Sept.

Jan. 15: Reporting period Oct. – Dec.

April 15: Reporting period Jan. – March

Annual Reports

Annual reports are due Aug. 1 and will include the fourth quarter report, for the reporting period April–June.

Final Reports

Final project reports are due at least 45 days prior to the ending date of the DNR-DSC contract. Projects with multiple contracts must work closely with DNR and DSC to determine when to submit final reports.

Because the annual and final reports can be large, the DNR and DSC are considering using an online reporting process and will pass on information as it becomes available.

Submitting Reports

Who you electronically submit your reports to depends on your region of the state. Reports should be submitted to Mike Franklin, at Mike.Franklin@iowaagriculture.gov, as well as your regional DSC field representative, DSC regional coordinator and DNR project officer.

DSC Field Representatives:

NE Iowa:

David Strom at David.Strom@iowaagriculture.gov

SE Iowa:

Paul Valin at Paul.Valin@iowaagriculture.gov

West Iowa:

Cathie Graves at Cathie.Graves@iowaagriculture.gov

Continued on page 5

QUESTIONS ABOUT CONTRACT CHANGES

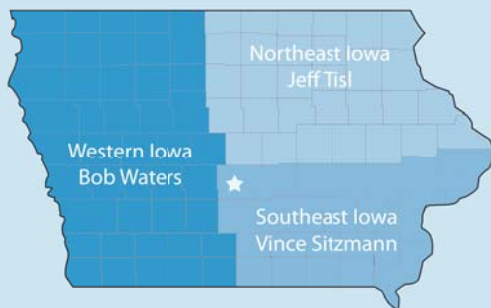
If you have questions, please contact:

Mike Franklin, DSC, at
(515) 281-6145 or Mike.Franklin@iowaagriculture.gov

Kyle Ament, DNR, at (515) 242-6196 or
Kyle.Ament@dnr.iowa.gov (northern Iowa)

Rachel Glaza, DNR, at (515) 281-8158 or
Rachel.Glaza@dnr.iowa.gov (southern Iowa)

DSC REGIONAL COORDINATORS



DNR PROJECT OFFICERS



Continued from page 4

DSC Regional Coordinators:

NE Iowa:

Jeff Tisl at Jeff.Tisl@iowaagriculture.gov

SE Iowa:

Vince Sitzmann at Vince.Sitzmann@iowaagriculture.gov

West Iowa:

Bob Waters at Bob.Waters@iowaagriculture.gov

DNR Project Officers:

North Iowa:

Kyle Ament at Kyle.Ament@dnr.iowa.gov

South Iowa:

Rachel Glaza at Rachel.Glaza@dnr.iowa.gov

Signage:

- If funds are supplied by Section 319, all signage installed as part of the project should feature both the DNR and EPA logos.
- If funds are supplied by WPF or WSFP, all signage installed as part of the project should include the IDALS-DSC logo.
- Copies of these logos will be supplied to the projects for this use and this use only. Any other use of logos must be cleared with the appropriate agency prior to display or publication.

Register soon for SWIM 2008 workshop at Springbrook

Learn more about the watershed approach and involving landowners at this year's Stream and Watershed Integrated Management (SWIM) workshop July 8-10.

The workshop, held at the Springbrook Conservation Education Center near Guthrie Center, addresses how streams work and solving problems in

streams.

Sessions – covering hydrology and habitats to stream rehabilitation and technical tools – are held in classrooms and out in the field.

Workshop sponsors include IDALS-DSC, DNR, NRCS, Iowa State University and the Guthrie County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The registration deadline for this year's workshop is June 20. For registration information, please visit www.iowadnr.gov/education/swim.html or contact Don Sievers at (641) 747-8383, ext. 14 or at Don.Sievers@dnr.iowa.gov.

Rule changes to provide funding for publicly owned lakes

The DNR's Natural Resource Commission adopted a final rule in March that will help watershed projects around publicly owned lakes.

The rule amends Chapter 31, Publicly Owned Lakes, allowing the NRC to establish a priority list yearly. It also requires applications to receive funding.

This funding, set aside from the

general fund, will be available for permanent soil conservation practices through IDALS for these priority watersheds.

In the current fiscal year, \$350,000 will be available. IDALS and DNR are encouraging Soil and Water Conservation Districts to apply for this funding, available beginning in July.

Receiving this funding now re-

quires a submitting a formal application.

The priority lakes will be determined by considering lake restoration, impaired waters and watershed improvement projects and priorities.

Watersheds with plans focused on sediment delivery issues will be given additional consideration in the funding process.

LiDAR coverage continues to expand across state

The Iowa LiDAR Project, a partnership between the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), IDALS, DNR and NRCS to collect statewide LiDAR data is well underway.

Currently, data has been collected for nearly 30 percent of the state.

ing leaf-on and flooded conditions. However, this can cause large gaps in the data where these obstructions occur.

The partner agencies have decided that the quality of the data is more critical than the timing and

get it right the first time,” said Chris Ensminger with the DNR’s GIS section.

The DOT and DNR have also partnered with the University of Northern Iowa to develop a web-based LiDAR portal for anyone to download the data in various formats at <http://geotree2.geog.uni.edu/lidar/>

The application is currently online, but functionality and number of data formats available are limited at this time. In the near future, all of the GIS derivatives, including 2 foot contours, 1 meter Digital Elevation Model (DEM), shaded relief grids and more will be served from the site.

Also, a number of tools are being developed that will enhance the user’s ability to download the data more efficiently.

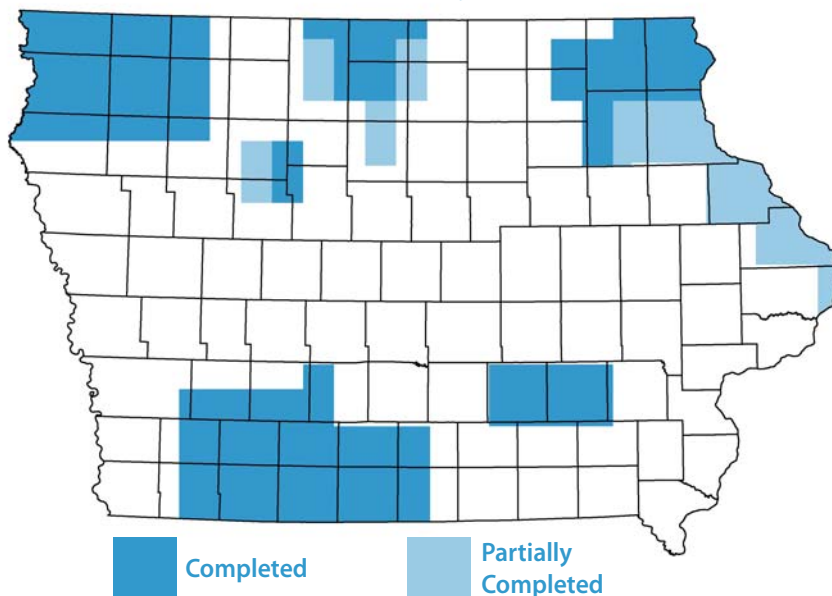
All of the data currently available on the site has not yet been extensively checked for quality.

“Quality control/quality assurance work is being done by the United States Geological Service but takes quite a bit of time,” Ensminger said. “While we do not anticipate any rejections, any data that fails the QA/QC process will immediately be removed from the UNI site.”

For more information, contact Ensminger at (515) 281-4216 or Chris.Ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov

LiDAR data collection progress

As of March 7, 2008



Collections have been hampered by heavy flooding and early green-up in spring 2007, followed by early and persistent snows in fall and winter 2007. Data collection should begin again in early spring and should be completed in about a year.

LiDAR data can be collected dur-

have opted to fly only under ideal conditions.

“We do realize that many land and resource managers are frustrated by the seemingly slow progress of the collection. Long and short, we are only going to do this once – at least in the near future – and we need to

CLEAN WATER STARTS WITH US

WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT IN IOWA

Published quarterly by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Editor: Jessie Brown, DNR: (515) 281-5131 or Jessie.Brown@dnr.iowa.gov

Contributors: Kyle Ament, Allen Bonini, Bill Ehm, Chris Ensminger, Rachel Glaza, Steve Hopkins, Adam Kiel, DNR; Mike Franklin, Jim Gillespie, Dean Lemke, Vince Sitzmann, Jeff Tisl, Bob Waters, DSC; Marty Adkins and Dave Beck, NRCS

The publication of this document has been funded by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Federal and State laws prohibit employment and/or public accommodation (such as access to services or physical facilities) discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability (mental and/or physical), gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 1-800-457-4416, or write to Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa, 50319.