

SOIL CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY DIVISION[27]

Notice of Intended Action

Proposing rulemaking related to soil and water resource conservation plans and providing an opportunity for public comment

The Soil Conservation and Water Quality Division hereby proposes to rescind Chapter 22, “Soil and Water Resource Conservation Plans,” Iowa Administrative Code, and to adopt a new Chapter 22 with the same title.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code section 161A.4.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapter 161A.

Purpose and Summary

This proposed rulemaking rescinds and replaces Chapter 22 to modernize and streamline the rules governing soil and water resource conservation plans. The proposed rules retain the existing requirements for district planning, plan content, five-year updates, annual review, filing, and development of a statewide conservation plan while removing outdated provisions, including an obsolete 1991 planning deadline, and updating agency references. The rulemaking also shifts approval of district plans and amendments from the State Soil Conservation and Water Quality Committee to the Division.

Regulatory Analysis

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on June 24, 2026. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- July 14, 2026

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Division for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Division no later than 4:30 p.m. on October 6, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

Colin Tadlock
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
1305 East Walnut Street, Fifth Floor
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Email: colin.tadlock@iowaagriculture.gov

Public Hearing

No public hearing is scheduled at this time. As provided in Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)“b,” an oral presentation regarding this rulemaking may be demanded by 25 interested persons, a governmental subdivision, the Administrative Rules Review Committee, an agency, or an association having 25 or more members.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee’s meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Rescind 27—Chapter 22 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 22 SOIL AND WATER RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLANS

27—22.1(161A) Authority and scope. This chapter establishes procedures and standards to be followed by the division of soil conservation and water quality, Iowa department of agriculture and land stewardship, in implementing the development of soil and water resource conservation plans in all soil and water conservation districts in Iowa and developing a comprehensive soil and water resource conservation plan for the state of Iowa. It establishes standards and guidelines that the soil and water conservation districts will use in fulfilling their responsibilities under this program.

27—22.2(161A) Rules are severable. If any provision of a rule or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or application of the rule that can be given effect without invalid provision or application, and to this end, the provisions of these rules are severable.

27—22.3(161A) Definition. In addition to the definitions in rule 27—10.3(161A), the following term is defined:

“*Soil and water resource conservation plan*” is a comprehensive long-range assessment of soil and surface water resources in the district consistent with rules approved by the district under Iowa Code section 161A.4. The plan will assess the condition of soil and water in the district; evaluate the type, amount, and quality of soil and water, the threat of soil erosion, floodwater, and sediment damages, and necessary preventative and control measures; develop methods to maintain or improve soil and water condition; and cooperate with other state and federal agencies to carry out this plan.

27—22.4(161A) Soil and water resource conservation plan development. This rule establishes criteria for districts to develop a plan to preserve and protect the public interest in the soil and water resources of this state and for future generations.

22.4(1) Plan development criteria.

a. The soil and water conservation district commissioners will develop a soil and water resource conservation plan as required by Iowa Code section 161A.4 that will include the content items required by rule 27—22.5(161A).

b. The district commissioners will use the following planning process criteria:

- (1) Examine and inventory the current resource situation.
- (2) Identify current problems.
- (3) List available resources—human and financial.

- (4) Determine objectives and goals.
- (5) Determine the best course of action to obtain those objectives and goals.
- (6) Review the action periodically for progress and effectiveness.

22.4(2) *Plan timeline.* The duration of the plan is five years. After five years, the plan should be revised and updated. It will go through the adoption and approval process again.

22.4(3) *Participation in the planning process.* Each soil and water conservation district should enlist the support and input of public and private sector agencies and organizations, including the county board of supervisors, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, the cooperative extension service, and the division.

27—22.5(161A) Soil and water resource conservation plan content. The plan will preserve and protect the public interest in the soil and water resources of this state for future generations. It will include the proper control and use of the soil and water resources by measures, including but not limited to the control of floods; the control of erosion by water or by wind; and the preservation of the quality of water for its optimum use for agricultural, irrigation, recreational, industrial, and domestic purposes, all of which shall be presumed to be conducive to public health, convenience, and welfare, both present and future.

22.5(1) *Plan content.*

- a. Preface.
 - (1) Purpose of the soil and water resource conservation planning process.
 - (2) Credits to sources and those assisting in the planning.
 - (3) Credits to groups providing input for district objectives and goals.
- b. Organization and authorities.
- c. General description of soil and water conservation district.
- d. Inventory of soil, water, and related natural resources.
 - (1) Existing land use—general description.
 - (2) Soil resources.
 - (3) Water resources.
 - (4) Recreation and wildlife resources.
 - (5) Mining and mineral resources.
 - (6) Land management.
 - (7) Factors limiting practice application.
 - (8) Actions needed to overcome limiting factors.
- e. District objectives, goals, and priorities.
- f. District policies.
- g. Statement of adoption.
- h. Statement of approval.
- i. Maps.

22.5(2) *Annual review.* There shall be an annual review of the plan by the district that will assist in developing the annual work plan. The plan may be amended as a part of the annual review.

27—22.6(161A) Soil and water resource conservation plan adoption, approval, filing, and distribution. The plan shall meet all of the requirements of Iowa Code chapter 161A and this chapter before final plan completion.

22.6(1) *Adoption.* The district commissioners by a motion at their regularly scheduled meeting shall approve their completed plan or amendment.

22.6(2) *Approval.* The district shall submit its completed plan or amendment to the division for approval. If found to meet the content requirements of rule 27—22.5(161A), the division shall approve the plan or amendment by motion at its regularly scheduled meeting. The approved plan will be signed by the administrator of the division.

22.6(3) *Filing.* The approved district plan or amendment shall be filed with the recorder in the county in which the district is located and shall be filed with the division as part of the state soil and water resource conservation plan.

22.6(4) *Distribution.* The commissioners shall provide notice of the filing and may provide a copy of the approved district plan to the county board of supervisors in the county where the district is located. The district may provide copies to all interested parties that have been a part of the planning process.

27—22.7(161A) State soil and water resource conservation plan. The division is responsible for developing a state plan according to Iowa Code section 161A.4(2) “*h.*” The state plan shall contain on a statewide basis the information required for a district plan.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 161A.