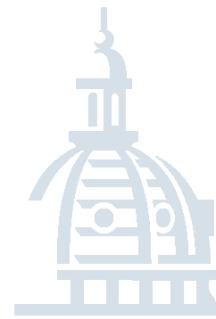


## FISCAL UPDATE Article

### *Fiscal Services Division*

December 5, 2016



### STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

**Meeting.** The State Soil Conservation Committee met on December 1, 2016, in Des Moines. The following topics were discussed:

**Nutrient Reduction Strategy.** Laurie Nowatzke of Iowa State University (ISU) provided an update on the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, including highlights from the [annual progress report](#). The Strategy has the overall goal of reducing nitrogen and phosphorus from nonpoint sources by 45.0%, and it was estimated that 5.0% of this goal has been accomplished. Other information included the following:

- It was estimated that \$122.7 million has been contributed to the Nutrient Reduction Strategy by partners in Iowa.
- In FY 2015, there were over 99,000 acres of land in the federal Conservation Reserve Program treated with wetlands and over 800 acres of land treated with the installation of a bioreactor.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded Iowa \$96.6 million in funding to conduct a five-year demonstration project related to flood mitigation and nutrient reduction.
- The federal Regional Conservation Partnership Program awarded Iowa partners \$9.6 million to increase the use of conservation practices on demonstration projects. The project will leverage \$4.8 million in State funding and \$33.0 million from the private sector.

**Director's Report.** Jim Gillespie, Division Administrator of the Soil Conservation Division, explained the Department budget request that was presented to the Governor. The two funding requests for the Soil Conservation Division included:

- A General Fund increase of \$5.2 million for the Water Quality Initiative.
- An increase of \$1.9 million per year, for the next four years, to close the remaining 18 agriculture drainage wells. The wells are located in Floyd, Grundy, Butler, and Humboldt counties.

Mr. Gillespie also discussed a concern regarding the weed Palmer Amaranth. This is an invasive weed that is native to the southwestern United States. However, the weed has been identified in at least nine counties in Iowa. Initially, the weed was located in crop fields associated with equipment and other imports from outside of the state. Recently, the weed has been found on ground set aside for conservation practices. The weed is tall and thin and can produce a large amount of seed that can easily move to corn and soybean fields. This could create higher weed management costs and greater yield losses.

**Field Services.** Vince Sitzmann, Chief of the Field Services Bureau, reported that Humboldt and Keokuk counties have been selected to participate in the reverse auction pilot project that was established by the Iowa Legislature in [HF 2454](#) (FY 2017 Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Act). The projects being considered include 11 projects for terraces and one project for installing a bioreactor. The projects will be evaluated for the amount of nutrients that can be removed from the water, as well as total cost of the project.

**Water Resources.** Jake Hansen, Chief of the Water Resources Bureau, reported that the Water Resource Coordinating Council will next meet on December 20, 2016, in Altoona. Mr. Hansen also reported that employees from the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (DALS) met with employees at the Department of Transportation (DOT) to discuss future construction projects and ways to mitigate effects on streams and wetlands. The DALS will consult with the DOT on future projects to reduce nutrients.

**Mines and Minerals.** Susan Kozak, Chief of the Mines and Minerals Bureau, reported that several projects were completed in FY 2016 due to the good weather allowing more construction time. Projects in the Bureau receive federal funds that are scheduled to sunset in 2021. Ms. Kozak also reported that the Bureau has been working with the Department of Natural Resources regarding used drilling fluid or mud that has resulted from pipeline work. If an active mineral mine site is used for disposing the drilling mud, testing must be completed to comply with reclamation requirements.

**Next Meeting.** The next meeting will be held on January 4, 2017, in Des Moines. The Committee will also be presenting to legislators at the State Capitol on January 16, 2017.

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