



LEOPOLD CENTER TASK FORCE HOLDS PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

Task Force. The Leopold Center Task Force held a public input meeting on August 9, 2017, in Ames that began with opening remarks by Wendy Wintersteen, Dean of the [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) at Iowa State University (ISU). The Task Force will hold five meetings to receive public input on the future of the Leopold Center and the comments received will be summarized in a report that will be presented to the Leopold Center Advisory Board (Board).

Background. The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at ISU was created in 1987 with the passage of the Iowa Groundwater Protection Act. The goal of the Center is to identify ways to farm profitably while conserving natural resources and reducing negative environmental and social impacts. The Leopold Center is managed by Director Mark Rasmussen, and is governed by a 17-member advisory board. The Task Force was created by the Board after the funding from the Groundwater Protection Fund was transferred from the Leopold Center to the Nutrient Research Center beginning in FY 2018. The Task Force is chaired by Director Rasmussen and Doug Gronau, the Chairperson of the Board.

Prior Funding Information. Prior to July 1, 2017, the Leopold Center received 35.0% of the fees that were collected and deposited into the Agriculture Management Account in the Groundwater Protection Fund. This included the annual inspection and license fees paid by all commercial fertilizer licensees and pesticide product registration fees. These fee programs are administered by the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The fees are deposited in the Groundwater Protection Fund that is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and the funds were transferred quarterly to the Leopold Center. The total amount transferred was approximately \$1.7 million per year. Such moneys are now transferred to the Iowa Nutrient Research Fund.

Public Input Guidelines. Members of the public were asked to consider the following guidelines when formulating comments and questions:

- What are your issues or challenges related to sustainable agriculture in Iowa?
- What are your major research priorities for the Leopold Center?
- What are the most important extension or outreach activities for the Leopold Center?
- What sources of funding could be used by the Leopold Center?
- What strategic partnerships or collaborations could the Leopold Center pursue?

Comments. The following are some of the comments received from members of the public at the meeting:

- The Leopold Center should encourage farmers to take a systems approach that uses natural ways to protect water quality.
- The public should be educated about the problems with losing top soil, as this is a natural carbon water filter.
- Encourage legislators to support agriculture research by public institutions.
- Move the Leopold Center to another university or organization.
- Encourage legislators to increase the sales tax to provide funding for the [Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund](#).
- Investigate other foundations that would contribute to the Leopold Center.
- Consider producing other crops besides corn and soybeans.
- Create a Leopold Center lottery ticket.
- Communicate the priorities of the Leopold Center to the Governor.
- Stay informed about the upcoming Farm Bill that will be passed in 2018.

- Revitalize rural Iowa and create sustainable agriculture production for persons on smaller farms.
- Focus on all types of agriculture production and not just on organic farming.
- Charge a \$1 service fee on football tickets to fund the Leopold Center.
- Educate all Iowans on the importance of the Leopold Center.

Future Meetings. The next public input meeting will be held on August 23, 2017, in Lewis, although the exact location was not announced. For more information, refer to the Leopold Center [website](#).

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