
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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STATE SOIL CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING

January Meeting. The January 4, 2018, meeting of the State Soil Conservation and Water Quality Committee was called to order by Paula Ellis, Committee Chairperson.

New Division Director. The Committee was notified that the Director of the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality retired on January 2, 2018, and the Committee will be involved in hiring a new Director. Bill Northey, Secretary of Agriculture, and Mike Naig, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, encouraged Committee members to recommend potential candidates. Secretary Northey also announced that Susan Kozak will be the interim Division Director.

Technical Staff Grants. Vince Sitzmann, Field Services Bureau Chief, informed the Committee that the National Association of Conservation Districts approved technical assistance grant funding for six Soil Conservation and Water Quality Districts in Iowa. The funding will pay for 3.5 full-time employee positions.

Federal Flood and Erosion Program. Mr. Sitzmann also discussed the revival of the federal Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, also known as the [PL-566 Watershed Program](#). The Program provides technical and financial assistance to state and local governments from the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service to reduce flooding and control erosion in a watershed. Currently, the Department is reviewing Iowa watersheds that may meet the requirements of the Program so they can apply for project funding.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Jake Hansen, Water Resources Bureau Chief, informed the Committee that there are five CREP projects in Floyd, Guthrie, Kossuth, and Grundy counties. There are also nine CREP projects in developmental stages that are in need of funding.

Buffalo Creek. Adam Schnieders, Department of Natural Resources, informed the Committee that the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognized the [Buffalo Creek Watershed Project](#) as a success story in reducing nonpoint source pollution. Buffalo Creek is a tributary of the Cedar River and flows through Fayette, Buchanan, Linn, and Jones counties. The project is administered by the Buchanan Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in Independence, and conservation practices were installed to reduce sediment delivery in the upper portion of the watershed. In addition to reducing the sediment flow, the freshwater mussel population has rebounded. The project was funded by the Watershed Improvement Review Board.

Next Meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2018, in Des Moines. Additional information is available on the [State Soil Conservation and Water Quality Committee](#) website.

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