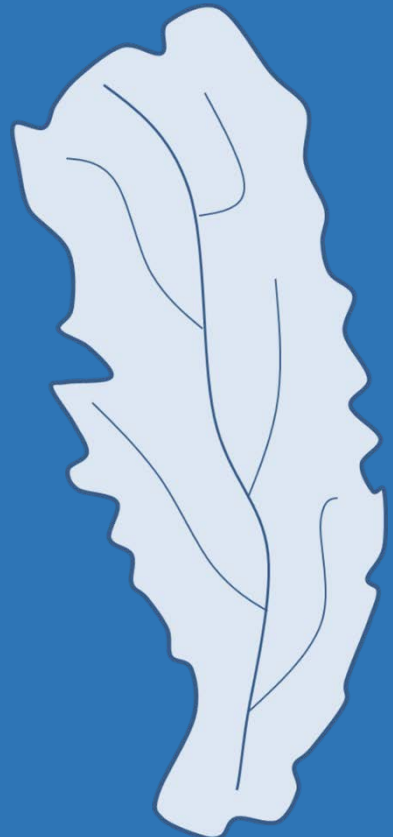


WATERSHED PLANNING
ADVISORY COUNCIL
2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Legislative Background

The Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC) was established by the Iowa Legislature (Iowa Code 466B.31) to assemble a diverse group of stakeholders to make recommendations to state and federal agencies to protect water resources in Iowa. (See more detail in Appendix A.)

WPAC met on October 13, 2020 to listen to five presentations based on previous areas of agreement listed below, and then broke into small groups to develop recommendations based on SMART goal principals and the ideas proposed within these three categories.

Presentations were:

Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy and 512 Funding Panel	Jake Hansen, IA Dept of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Lori Beary, Iowa Finance Authority Matt Helmers, Iowa Nutrient Research Center
Source Water Protection in Iowa	Aaron Schroeder, IA Rural Water Association
Importance of Updating Aging Drainage Infrastructure	Mike Castellano, Iowa State University
Environmental Economics and Water Quality	Silvia Secchi, University of Iowa

WPAC members were assigned at random to three working groups to discuss potential recommendations. The purpose of these small working groups is to develop recommendations for water resource topics that addressed partnerships, economics, and monitoring. Once recommendations were developed within the small groups, WPAC reconvened as a whole to discuss each recommendation, propose changes to the language, and ask clarifying questions. With a quorum present, WPAC members voted on each of the recommendations.

Present organizations were:

- One member selected by the Iowa League of Cities.
- One member selected by the Iowa Association of Business and Industry.
- One member selected by the Iowa Water Pollution Control Association.
- One member selected by the Iowa Rural Water Association.
- One member selected by the Iowa Environmental Council.
- One member selected by the Iowa Soybean Association.
- One member selected by the Iowa Pork Producers Council.
- One member selected by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Iowa.
- One member selected by the Department of Natural Resources.
- Two members selected by the Iowa Conservation Alliance.
- One member selected by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

- One member selected by the Iowa floodplain and stormwater management association.
- One member selected by Iowa rivers revival

Ex-Officio members present:

- Senator Joe Bolkcom
- Representative Charles Isenhart
- Representative John Wills

Absent:

- One member selected by growing green communities
- One member selected by the Iowa farm bureau federation.
- One member selected by agribusiness association of Iowa
- One member selected by Iowa drainage district association
- One member selected by the Iowa corn growers association.

Absent Ex-Officio member:

- One member of the senate: Senator Dan Zumbach

WPAC Recommendations for 2021 Legislature

Partnerships

1. For watershed projects to be effective long-term, watershed coordinator FTE positions should be funded by the state. By funding coordinators long-term, this will enable more effective relationships with partners.
2. For partnerships to be more effective at the watershed level, we encourage broader public involvement beyond WMA members and agencies. Partners and the public should be invited to annual statewide watershed or conservation based meeting to share updates and opportunities for involvement in the watershed. This will be quantified by measuring how many partners and cooperators are involved in projects, practice implementation, and the co-benefits achieved, such as Source Water Protection. Consideration for funding should be given to projects that have demonstrated sufficient involvement of partners within a watershed project.
3. Drainage system improvements should be contemplated in a way that incorporates water quality practices as a component of the overall project. Partnerships are encouraged as a means to support and promote these types of improvements, such as with drainage contractors.
4. Systems resiliency should be incorporated into all projects. This includes source water protection, flood risk reduction, crop production systems, wastewater treatment, and other co-benefits.

Economics

5. To encourage the implementation of water quality improvement projects, the legislature should explore the constraints to the development of water quality improvement projects, including improved collaboration with the Army Corp of

Engineers to address expedient, efficient, and holistic drainage area construction practices. This should be addressed within one year by the legislature for efficient use of non-point source funding (SF512 and other).

This recommendation aims for a regulatory approval time of less than 12 months. The legislature could direct IDNR and IDALS to conduct an assessment of the surrounding states, EPA, and Corp of Engineers to evaluate the regulatory environment and how processes could be improved for expedient, efficient, and holistic drainage area construction practices. Evaluation should include engineering firms, contractors, and farm organizations that support the design and construction effort.

6. To address soil health, regenerative agriculture, and long-term sustainable agriculture, we suggest the legislature re-evaluates the role of the Leopold Center and consider re-establishing funding for this Center. In support of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, regenerative agriculture and soil restoration are key to water quality improvements. We recommend evaluation of Center funding in the upcoming legislative session.
7. To measure the economic efficiency of conservation programs and practice implementation, we recommend the legislature to direct IDNR to explore the inclusion of economic or financial data in the Nutrient Reduction Exchange Database. Having this data available would drive funding to more efficient nutrient reduction projects as well as establish evaluation to fund projects. We recommend this should be addressed in the next legislative session.

Monitoring

8. Recognizing soil health and water quality are interrelated, WPAC recommends more data be collected addressing the relationship between soil health and water quality.
9. Where applicable, require Watershed Management Authorities (WMAs) and watershed projects to integrate water monitoring activities into their project applications. Funding originating from Senate File 512 will be based on grant application process that would prioritize WMAs or projects with existing or strong watershed plans.
10. We recommend increased monitoring of manure application plans be done to ensure the annual application rate is not exceeded for a given piece of land each year. The land should not be listed on more than one separate application plan. Increase annual compliance fee to cover cost.

2020 Background Working Sessions

In June 2020, WPAC Chair John Whitaker and Co-Chair Mike Kuntz requested that each member of WPAC present provide input as to what they would like to see in the next meeting where recommendations will be developed. Suggestions from the WPAC members informed the agenda in respect to invited speakers as well as the format and length of the meeting.

The Iowa Water Center

For the fifth year, the Iowa Water Center (IWC) has continued to be a valuable partner to WPAC. As an unbiased research-based organization who is not a member of WPAC, this group functions as a third-party facilitator for WPAC activity.

This year, the IWC has contributed by taking meeting minutes, helping identify and invite presenters for meetings, running small group sessions, and assisting in writing materials.

2021 Meetings

New chair and vice chair candidates will be nominated and voted upon in 2021, if recommended by WPAC members. Plans to modify tasks and targets within the recommendations will be planned for the first meeting and creating recommendations will be the main topic of a second meeting in the summer and fall of 2021.

Background

The Watershed Planning Advisory Council (WPAC) was established by the 2010 Iowa Legislature (see Appendix A: Iowa Code 466B.31) to assemble a diverse group of stakeholders to review research and make recommendations to state and federal agencies regarding methods to protect water resources in Iowa, assure an adequate supply of water, mitigate and prevent floods, and coordinate the management of the state's resources in a sustainable, fiscally responsible, and environmentally conscientious manner.

The voting members of WPAC (see Appendix B) consist of representatives of designated nongovernmental organizations as well as representatives appointed by the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Department of Natural Resources. Nonvoting members include two members of the Iowa Senate and two members of the Iowa House of Representatives.

Many of the organizations that make up WPAC were involved in the Watershed Quality Planning Taskforce (WQPTF) that was called for by the Iowa Legislature in 2006 to make recommendations on water quality programs and the need to improve water quality and reduce pollution from both point and nonpoint sources (Senate File 2363). In November 2007, the WQPTF produced a consensus report:

<http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/WPAC/pdf/finallegislativereport2007.pdf>. The WQPTF recommendations were considered by the Iowa Legislature in 2008, resulting in the creation of a Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC):

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/466B.pdf>.

WPAC continues to consult with representatives of the WRCC, other governmental and non-governmental organizations and provides recommendations on watershed planning and effective implementation.

Appendix A: Iowa Code 466B.31

WATER PROTECTION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT, §466B.31

466B.31 Watershed planning advisory council.

1. A watershed planning advisory council is established for purposes of assembling a diverse group of stakeholders to review research and make recommendations to various state entities regarding methods to protect water resources in the state, assure an adequate supply of water, mitigate and prevent floods, and coordinate the management of those resources in a sustainable, fiscally responsible, and environmentally responsible manner.

The advisory council may seek input from councils of governments or other organizations in the development of its recommendations. The advisory council shall meet once a year and at other times as deemed necessary to meet the requirements of this section. The advisory council may appoint a task force to assist the advisory council in completing its duties.

2. The watershed planning advisory council shall consist of all of the following members:

a. The voting members of the advisory council shall include all of the following:

- (1) One member selected by the Iowa association of municipal utilities.
- (2) One member selected by the Iowa league of cities.
- (3) One member selected by the Iowa association of business and industry.
- (4) One member selected by the Iowa water pollution control association.
- (5) One member selected by the Iowa rural water association.
- (6) One member selected by growing green communities.
- (7) One member selected by the Iowa environmental council.
- (8) One member selected by the Iowa farm bureau federation.
- (9) One member selected by the Iowa corn growers association.
- (10) One member selected by the Iowa soybean association.
- (11) One member selected by the Iowa pork producers council.
- (12) One member selected by the soil and water conservation districts of Iowa.
- (13) One person representing the department of agriculture and land stewardship selected by the secretary of agriculture.
- (14) One person representing the department of natural resources selected by the director.
- (15) Two members selected by the Iowa conservation alliance.
- (16) One member selected by the Iowa drainage district association.
- (17) One member selected by the agribusiness association of Iowa.
- (18) One member selected by the Iowa floodplain and storm water management association.
- (19) One member selected by Iowa rivers revival.

b. The nonvoting members of the advisory council shall include all of the following:

- (1) Two members of the senate. One senator shall be appointed by the majority leader of the senate and one senator shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate.
- (2) Two members of the house of representatives. One member shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives.
- (3) By December 1 of each year, the watershed planning advisory council shall submit a report to the governor, the general assembly, the department of agriculture and land stewardship, the department of natural resources, and the water resources coordinating council. The report shall include recommendations regarding all of the following:

a. Improving water quality and optimizing the costs of voluntarily achieving and maintaining water quality standards.

- b.* Creating economic incentives for voluntary nonpoint source load reductions, point source discharge reductions beyond those required by the federal Water Pollution Control Act, implementation of pollution prevention programs, wetland restoration and creation, and the development of emerging pollution control technologies.
- c.* Facilitating the implementation of total maximum daily loads, urban storm water control programs, and nonpoint source management practices required or authorized under the federal Water Pollution Control Act. This paragraph shall not be construed to obviate the requirement to develop a total maximum daily load for waters that do not meet water quality standards as required by section 303(d) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act or to delay implementation of a total maximum daily load that has been approved by the department and the director.
- d.* Providing incentives, methods, and practices for the development of new and more accurate and reliable pollution control quantification protocols and procedures, including but not limited to development of policy based on information and data that is publicly available and that can be verified and evaluated.
- e.* Providing greater flexibility for broader public involvement through community-based, nonregulatory, and performance-driven watershed management planning.
- f.* Assigning responsibility for monitoring flood risk, flood mitigation, and coordination with federal agencies.
- g.* Involving cities, counties, and other local and regional public and private entities in watershed improvement including but not limited to incentives for participation in a watershed management authority created under this chapter.

(4) Each year, the voting members of the advisory council shall designate one voting member as chairperson.

2010 Acts, ch 1116, §1; 2011 Acts, ch 131, §98, 158

Appendix B: WPAC Membership 2020

Organization	Name
Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities	Jennifer Terry
Iowa League of Cities	Mike Kuntz
Iowa Association of Business and Industry	Brad Hartkopf
Iowa Water Pollution Control Association	Greg Sindt
Iowa Rural Water Association	Scott Shover
Growing Green Communities	Vacant
Iowa Environmental Council	Alicia Vasto
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation	Rick Robinson
Iowa Corn Growers Association	Ben Gleason
Iowa Soybean Association	Todd Sutphin
Iowa Pork Producers Council	Drew Mogler
Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Iowa	John Whitaker
Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship	Jake Hansen
Department of Natural Resources	Adam Schneiders
Iowa Conservation Alliance	Fred Long
Iowa Conservation Alliance	Steve Roe
Iowa Drainage District Association	John Torbert
Agribusiness Association of Iowa	Shawn Richmond
Iowa Floodplain and Stormwater Management Association	Mark Land
Iowa Rivers Revival	Robin Fortney
Ex-Officio Senate member 1	Dan Zumbach
Ex-Officio Senate member 2	Joe Bolkcom
Ex-Officio House member 1	Charles Isenhardt
Ex-Officio House member 2	John Wills