

# Infrastructure Status Reports

12/31/2020

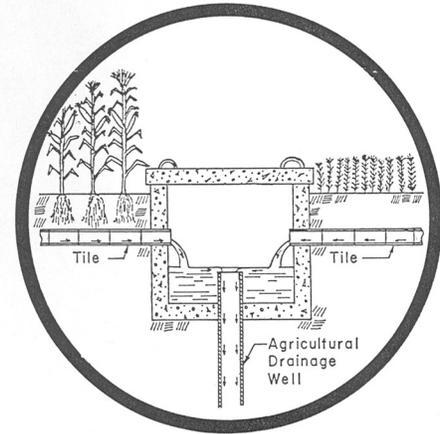


## IOWA DEPARTMENT OF **AGRICULTURE & LAND STEWARDSHIP**

Division of Soil Conservation  
& Water Quality

## Agricultural Drainage Well Closure Assistance Fund

Agricultural drainage wells (ADWs) were developed in the early to mid-1900's and discharge cropland tile drainage water to underground aquifers. The fund was established in 1997 to protect drinking water aquifers by cost-sharing with landowners to close agricultural drainage wells and develop alternative drainage outlets to surface streams or install alternative management practices. Projects are typically constructed through drainage districts, although some projects are undertaken by individual landowners. Some of the remaining wells to be closed are located in karst areas with shallow limestone.



- 300 registered agricultural drainage wells (ADWs) in Iowa
- 100 ADWs closed by landowners, Watershed Improvement Review Board funding, or determined by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to not be ADWs or to be non-functioning
- 180 ADWs closed to date using \$16.63 million of assistance funds
- 4 ADW closures in project construction phase
- 10 ADW closures in design phase with 2020 construction
- 6 ADW closures anticipated for FY21

**Fund Status**

FY21 Appropriation	\$1,875,000
Balance 6/30/20 Brought Forward	\$8,672,070
Interest to Date	\$11,118
Expenditures to Date	\$462,860
Obligated/Encumbered	\$10,095,328
Unobligated	\$0

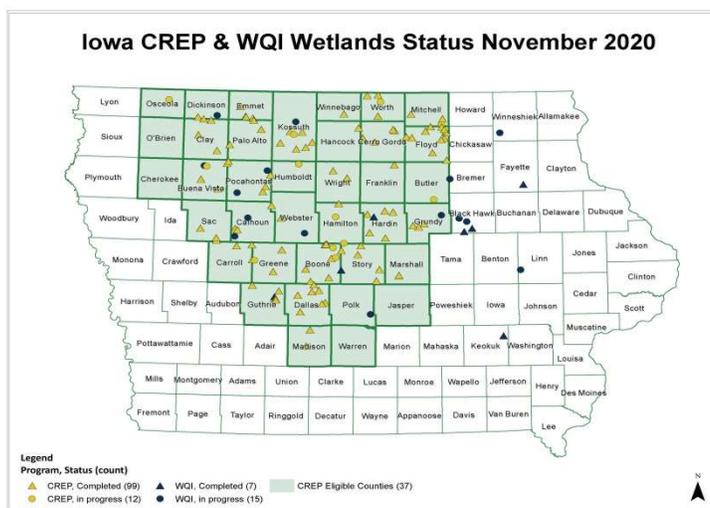
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## Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was initiated in 2001 and is a joint effort of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the USDA Farm Service Agency to protect Iowa drinking water and reduce hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. It is a highly targeted water quality program focusing on the reduction of nitrate loads to surface waters through the restoration of strategically located and designed wetlands that intercept tile-drainage water from upper-lying cropland.



- Research and monitoring by Iowa State University has shown that CREP wetlands remove 40-90% of the nitrate in tile-drainage water
- Wetlands restored to date (99) and those currently being designed (10) are estimated to remove over 1,684,800 lbs of nitrogen **annually**. Roughly 126,360 tons of nitrogen will be removed over their design life. These wetlands will provide water quality protection for 137,310 acres of land
- Hundreds of potential wetland locations exist for landowner consideration
- Average lifetime nitrogen removal costs: \$0.26/lb.
- State funds are matched with Federal funds
- FY22 appropriation request = \$1,000,000



### Fund Status

FY21 appropriation	\$1,000,000
Balance 6/30/20 Brought Forward	\$1,364,586
Reimbursements	\$ 345,094
Expenditures to Date	\$1,917,428
Obligated/Encumbered	\$ 792,252
Unobligated	\$ 0

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## District Initiatives/Buffer Initiative

The District Initiatives/Buffer Initiative (Conservation Reserve Program-CRP) was established in 2000 as a part of the Iowa Water Quality Initiative. Program initiatives are delivered through local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to leverage dollars for federal conservation programs, increasing Iowa's overall participation in both state and federal programs. Locally-led initiatives prioritize and target sensitive areas, by providing funds and resources to protect our soil and water resources.



- SWCDs receive funds to provide technical assistance to enroll CRP and install Federal Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) practices.
- Iowa traditionally leads the nation in the USDA Continuous CRP with acres enrolled.
- Under the EQIP program, landowners have invested an estimated \$10.535 million along with over \$30.1 million from federal funds.
- SWCDs partner with Pheasants Forever, NRCS and IDNR to support habitat improvement projects on private land.
- Incentives support grazing systems on expiring CRP contracts that support permanent cover as well as filters and buffers that protect Iowa's lakes, rivers and streams.
- SWCDs and staff work one-on-one with landowners and operators to implement conservation practices.
- FY22 appropriation request - \$900,000



### Fund Status

FY21 Appropriation	\$ 900,000
Balance 6/30/20 Brought Forward	\$ 709,389
Refunds/Reimbursements	\$ 10,392
Expenditures to Date	\$ 325,141
Obligated/Encumbered	\$ 1,294,640
Unobligated	\$0

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## Iowa Conservation Cost Share Program

Iowa's Conservation Cost Share program was established in 1973 to protect the soil and water resources of the state from erosion and sediment damage. The program encourages the adoption of land stewardship and conservation practices that sustain agriculture and preserve our state's natural resources. Technical assistance is provided by IDALS-DSCWQ and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and practices are designed to NRCS technical standards. Applicants are required to enter into maintenance agreements to ensure long-term success and performance. Practices are approved locally by Iowa's 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).



- Soil and water conservation practices:
  - enhance soil quality and improve water infiltration
  - reduce erosion, soil loss and runoff
  - reduce water impairments from sediment and nutrients
  - reduce storm water impact on private property and infrastructure
- From July 1 to December 31, 2020, IDALS processed landowner payments for 568 soil and water conservation practices.
- 25,569 acres have been protected from excessive soil erosion
  - Includes 516,000' of terraces, 172 acres of waterways, 12,011 acres of cover crops, 57 grade stabilization structures.
- Landowners invest a minimum of 50% of their own money on these practices
- The investment of cost-share funds and those of private landowners are reinvested in Iowa's local economies, benefiting the communities
- In September 2020, 45 SWCDs requested \$9.52 million in supplemental funds with only \$2.6 million available, leaving \$6.92 million of unmet demand and lost opportunities to improve our soil and water resources
- FY22 appropriation request = \$8,325,000

<b>Fund Status</b>	FY21 Appropriation	\$8,325,000
	Balance 6/30/20 Brought Forward	\$5,311,560
	Refunds & Reimbursements	\$10,647
	Expended	\$3,913,501
	Obligated/Encumbered	\$9,733,706
	Unobligated	\$0

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## Soil and Water Conservation Administration

There is a need to improve soil quality, maintain productivity, enhance water quality, manage nutrients properly, and provide flood protection. To do so and ensure program dollars are spent effectively, IDALS must provide the best administrative and technical assistance possible for the Iowa Financial Incentives Program, Resource Enhancement and Protection Program, Watershed Protection Fund, Water Protection Fund Projects, Water Quality Initiative and State Revolving Fund Program. Staff also assist with implementing projects and practices funded by the federal government; including the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Wetland Reserve Program, and other programs in all 99 counties and 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Administrative and technical staff are vitally important to the 100 field offices to ensure IDALS is fully functional and able to communicate and provide assistance to implement conservation and water quality practices across the state.

- Staff assist landowners in applying over \$34.5 million in state funded programs
- Staff help USDA/NRCS apply approximately \$30 million in federally funded conservation practices
- FY22 appropriation request = \$3,800,000

### Fund Status

FY21 Appropriation	\$3,800,000
Balance 6/30/20 Brought Forward	\$3,800,000
Expenditures to Date	\$3,800,000
Obligated/Encumbered	\$3,800,000
Unobligated	\$0

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## Watershed Protection Fund

The Watershed Protection Fund was initiated in 2000 as part of the broader Iowa Water Quality Initiative. Watershed development funds are available to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for that first important step of identifying problems in the watershed and creating a sound plan for improvement. Implementation of watershed protection projects brings together the community, both rural and urban, to target resources to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality, provide flood reduction, and protect natural resources. IDALS-DSCWQ, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) work together in the support of these projects in order to achieve the maximum watershed improvements and water quality benefits with the state and federal program funds available to each agency.



- 14 watershed projects are underway in 28 SWCDs
- State funds are cost-shared at rates up to 75% with applicants assuming at least 25% of the cost
- 47 watershed project practice claims were reimbursed totaling \$293,200 and leveraging \$115,144 from other sources including applicant contributions
- 1,434 acres were protected with a soil loss reduction of 3,250 tons/year
- Sediment delivery to the state's water bodies was reduced by 4,639 tons/year along with 6,030 lbs/year of Phosphorus and 8,387 lbs/year of Nitrogen
- Projects have leveraged state funds with over \$1,500,000 of DNR Section 319 federal program funds
- FY22 appropriation request = \$900,000

### Fund Status

FY21 Appropriation	\$ 900,000
Balance 6/30/20 Brought Forward	\$ 904,772
Refunds & Reimbursements	\$ 3,847
Expenditures to Date	\$ 338,200
Obligated/Encumbered	\$ 1,470,419
Unobligated	\$ 0

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## Iowa Water Quality Initiative (WQI)

The Iowa Water Quality Initiative was established in 2013 to help implement the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS), which is a science and technology based approach to achieving a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus losses to our waters. The strategy addresses both point sources, such as municipal wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities, and nonpoint sources, including farm fields and urban stormwater runoff.

The WQI seeks to harness the collective ability of both private and public resources and organizations to rally around the NRS and implement proven conservation practices to reduce nutrient loss from non-point sources and improve water quality.

A total of 100 demonstration projects were operational in 2020 across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices. This includes 17 targeted watershed projects, 7 projects focused on expanding the use and innovative delivery of water quality practices, 9 planning and development projects, and 67 urban stormwater management demonstration projects. More than 350 public and private organizations are participating in these projects.

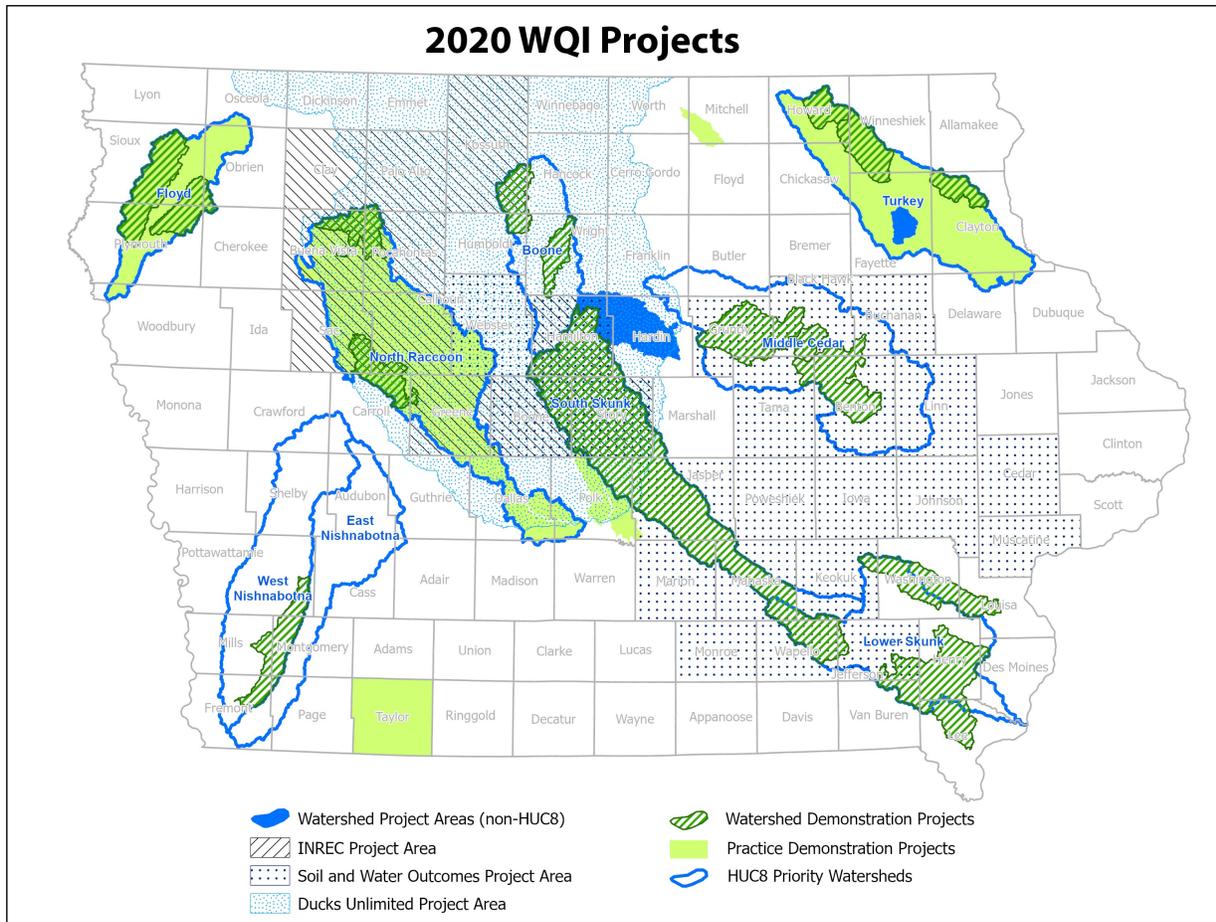
More information about the initiative can be found at [www.CleanWaterIowa.org](http://www.CleanWaterIowa.org).

- 3,500 farmers utilized \$6million in cost share funds in the fall of 2020 to install nutrient reduction practices. The practices that were eligible for this funding are cover crops, no-till or strip till, or using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer. Farmers using cost share funding contribute an estimated \$12M of their own funding for these practices.
- 17 watershed demonstration projects within the designated priority watersheds.
  - Focused on demonstrating NRS practices on a watershed scale
  - Conduct edge-of-field monitoring in targeted watersheds to collect data and target practices
- 67 active or completed urban conservation demonstration projects.
  - In the process of adding more urban projects. Anticipate new projects starting April 2021.
- 7 active practice demonstration projects focused on targeted and innovative delivery of NRS practices.
- 4 Planning and Development Projects added in FY2021.
- IDALS has successfully leveraged state funds to bring in several federal grants through the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and EPA-Gulf of Mexico Program. In 2020, IDALS was awarded NRCS-RCPP funding for 2 new projects:
  - \$3,000,000 for the Turkey River Watershed Partnership Project
  - \$10,000,000 for the Iowa Systems Approach to Conservation Drainage (ISACD)
- FY22 appropriation request = \$10,575,000 (\$8.2 million requested from General Fund & \$2.375 million requested from EFF)

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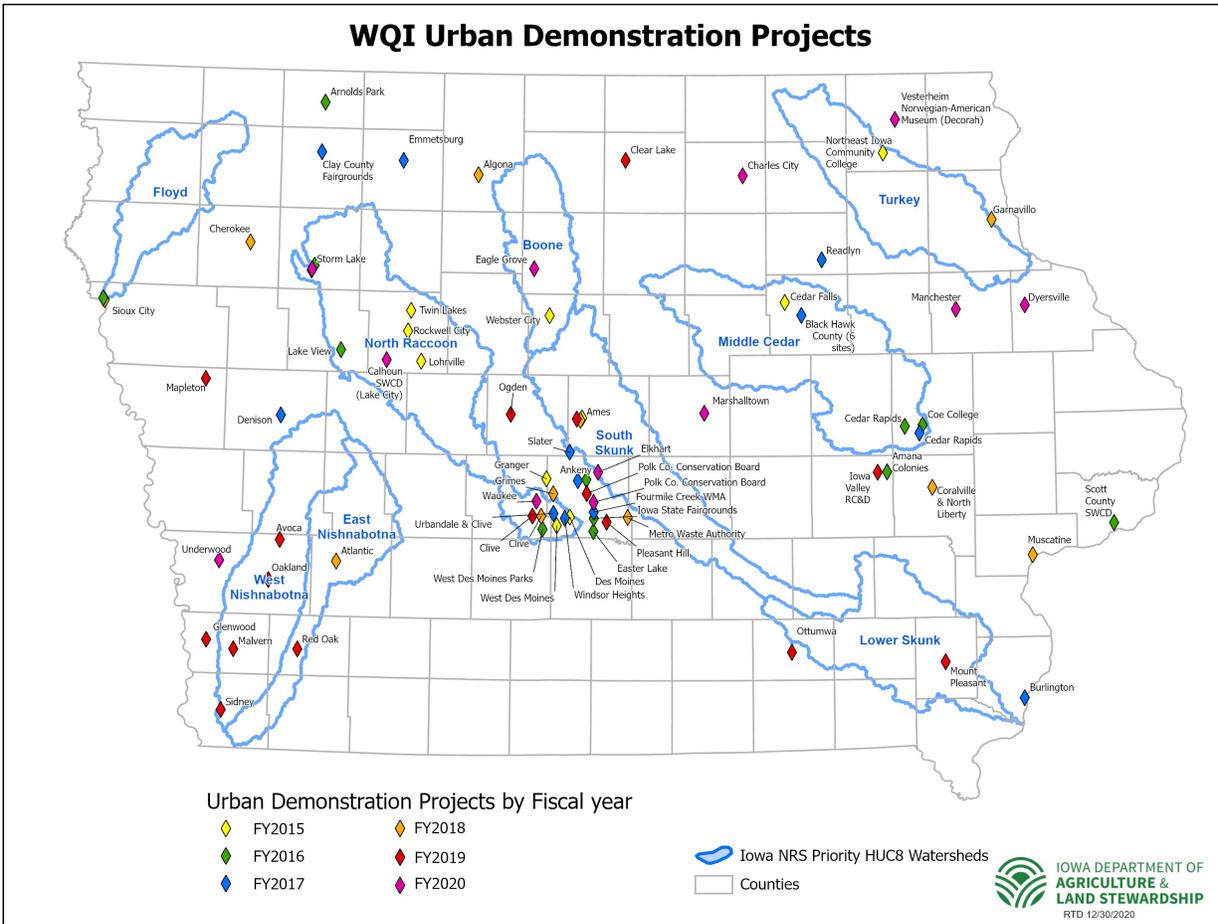
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**Fund Status**

FY21 RIIF Appropriation	\$5,200,000
FY21 General Fund Appropriation	\$3,000,000
FY21 Env. First Fund Appropriation	\$2,375,000
Balance 6/30/20 Brought Forward	\$15,725,861
Interest to Date	\$23,281
Refunds & Reimbursements	\$202,720
Expenditures to Date	\$6,810,296
Obligated/Encumbered	\$19,716,566
Unobligated	\$0

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