

Infrastructure Status Reports

12/31/2023

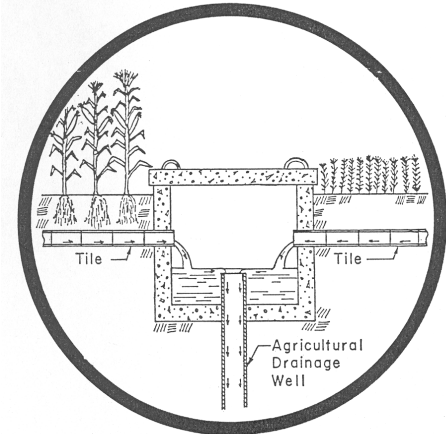


**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE &
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

**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
- 101 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
- 189 ADWs closed to date using \$18.35 million of assistance funds
- 10 ADW closures currently in bidding or construction phase
- All remaining registered ADWs will be closed in 2024

Fund Status

FY24 Appropriation	\$0
Balance 6/30/23 Brought Forward	\$5,330,083
Interest to Date	\$101,077
Expenditures to Date	\$117,884
Obligated/Encumbered	\$5,313,276
Unobligated	\$0

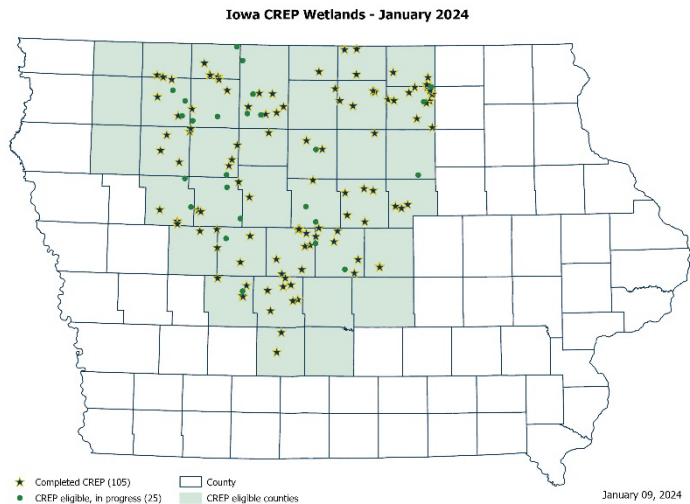
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Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

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
- Program-eligible wetlands restored to date (105) and those currently being designed (25) are estimated to remove over 1,979,100 lbs of nitrogen annually. Roughly 147,757 tons of nitrogen will be removed over their design life. These wetlands will provide water quality protection for 162,783 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
- FY25 appropriation request = \$1,000,000



Fund Status

FY24 appropriation	\$1,000,000
Balance 6/30/23 Brought Forward	\$1,578,689
Reimbursements	\$0
Expenditures to Date	\$197,706
Obligated/Encumbered	\$2,380,983
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 \$20 million along with over \$39.1 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.
- FY25 appropriation request - \$900,000

Fund Status

FY24 Appropriation	\$ 900,000
Balance 6/30/23 Brought Forward	\$ 580,094
Refunds/Reimbursements	\$ 23,402
Expenditures to Date	\$ 840,364
Obligated/Encumbered	\$ 663,132
Unobligated	\$0

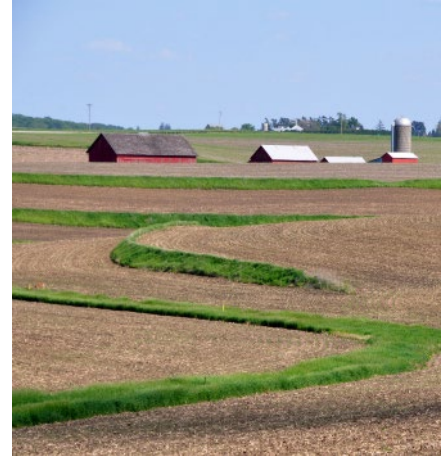
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Iowa Conservation Cost Share Program

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, 2023, IDALS processed landowner payments for 380 soil and water conservation practices totaling over \$2.88 million in dollars expended.
- 8,287 acres have been protected from excessive soil erosion
 - Includes 440,846 feet of terraces, 109 acres of waterways, 4,013 acres of cover crops, 41 water and sediment control basins, and 37 grade stabilization structures.
- Landowners invest a minimum of 50% of their own money implementing 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 2023, 33 SWCDs requested \$9.78 million in supplemental funds with only \$3.08 million available, leaving \$6.7 million of unmet demand and lost opportunities to improve our soil and water resources
- FY25 appropriation request = \$8,325,000

Fund Status	FY24 Appropriation	\$8,325,000
	Balance 6/30/23 Brought Forward	\$7,502,132
	Refunds & Reimbursements	\$6,116
	Expended	\$3,555,838
	Obligated/Encumbered	\$12,277,410
	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 \$42.35 million in state funded programs
- Staff helped USDA/NRCS apply approximately \$49.6 million in federally funded conservation practices
- FY25 appropriation request = \$3,800,000

Fund Status

FY24 Appropriation	\$3,800,000
Balance 6/30/23 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
- 75 watershed project practice claims were reimbursed totaling \$437,997 and leveraging \$458,981 from other sources including applicant contributions
- 4,621 acres were protected with a soil erosion reduction of 8,663 tons/year
- Sediment delivery to the state's water bodies was reduced by 2,609 tons/year along with 3,386 lbs/year of Phosphorus and 6,542 lbs/year of Nitrogen
- Projects have leveraged state funds with over \$2,101,629 of DNR Section 319 federal program funds
- FY25 appropriation request = \$900,000

Fund Status

FY24 Appropriation	\$ 900,000
Balance 6/30/23 Brought Forward	\$ 836,640
Refunds & Reimbursements	\$ 0
Expenditures to Date	\$ 482,997
Obligated/Encumbered	\$ 1,253,643
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 21 demonstration projects were operational in FY 2023 across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices. This includes 14 targeted watershed projects, 5 projects focused on expanding the use and innovative delivery of water quality practices, and 2 planning and development projects. More than 400 public and private organizations are participating in these projects.

More information about the initiative can be found at www.CleanWaterIowa.org.

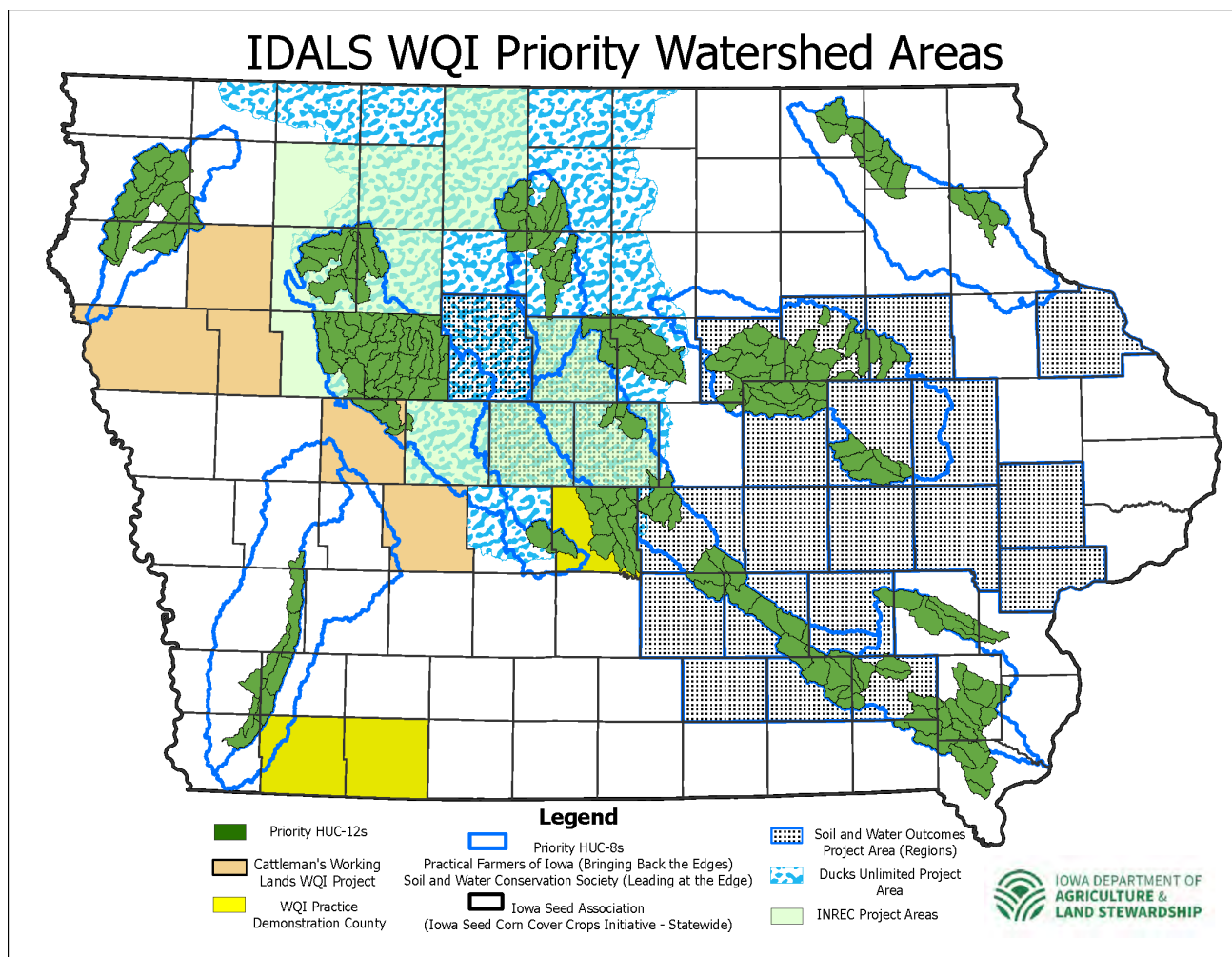
- 4,300 farmers implemented \$6.2 million in cost share funds in FY 2023 to install nutrient reduction practices. The practices that were eligible for this funding are cover crops, no-till or strip till, or using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer. Farmers using cost share funding contribute an estimated \$12.4M of their own funding for these practices.
- 14 watershed demonstration projects within the designated priority watersheds.
 - Focused on demonstrating NRS practices on a watershed scale
- 5 active practice demonstration projects focused on targeted and innovative delivery of NRS practices.
- 2 Planning and Development Projects operating in FY2023.
- 59 Total Projects urban conservation demonstration projects completed since FY 2015
- 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, Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) and EPA-Gulf of Mexico and Gulf Hypoxia Programs. In 2022, IDALS was awarded NRCS-RCPP funding for 1 new project:
 - \$5,844,156 for the Iowa Working Lands Conservation Partnership
- FY25 appropriation request = \$10,575,000 (\$8.2 million requested from RIIIF & \$2.375 million requested from EFF)

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WQI Demonstration Projects



Fund Status

FY24 RIIF Appropriation	\$8,200,000
FY24 Env. First Fund Appropriation	\$2,375,000
FY24 Ag Management Acct Transfers to Date	\$111,896
Balance 6/30/23 Brought Forward	\$11,606,986
Interest to Date	\$235,052
Refunds & Reimbursements	\$208,434
Expenditures to Date	\$5,518,047
Obligated/Encumbered	\$17,219,321
Unobligated	\$0

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